

IMPLICATIONS OF A NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN (PART IV)

HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS FIRST SESSION

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IMPLICATIONS OF A NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN (PART IV)

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2015

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:17 a.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ed Royce (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman ROYCE. This hearing will come to order. I will ask everyone to take their seats at this time. This hearing is on implications of a nuclear agreement with Iran. This morning, the committee continues to examine the administration's agreement. To help further assess this deal we are joined by several retired officers, two admirals and a general, who served their country with distinction, and we have a noted thinker with us on the region.

And this, by the way, is I think the 30th hearing that we have held on this issue, 30th hearing or briefing, since these negotiations began. I appreciate the commitment that all the members have made to analyze what is a very complex issue here, as the House gets set for a vote this week. I would like to recognize Ranking Member Engel for his partnership as we have approached the issue in a bipartisan way throughout these hearings.

Unfortunately, in my view, it is quite clear that this agreement makes Iran stronger at the end of the day. I say that because the billions of dollars here, some \$100 billion provided in immediate sanctions relief, is just a down payment, as Iran is guaranteed a reconnection to the global economy. The strangle on its banks and businesses, the money that has been held in escrow, will now be returned to the regime. It will be returned in the way of a system in Iran where the IRGC and the Quds Forces own many of the major businesses in the country.

So it is not just unlocking this money from escrow into the accounts of senior IRGC leaders, clerics, and the Ayatollah himself, who increasingly controls the businesses in Iran. It is also putting into motion what comes next in terms of future deals, where those individuals are going to be the key decisionmakers. They are the ones that are going to be empowered under this agreement.

Politically, of course, that means it solidifies the Supreme Leader's grip on power. That is why he did the deal, to keep his revolution intact. As we said early on, the right kind of pressure on Iran would give that Ayatollah a choice between real compromise on his nuclear program or economic collapse, but that legislation that we

passed to put on those additional sanctions was blocked in the Senate.

So militarily, in a few short years—if they wait that long—Iran is free to build up its tanks, its fighter jets, its intercontinental ballistic missiles. Its proxies in the region can continue to wreak havoc and back terrorism. Indeed, Iran's elite Quds Force has transferred funds to Hamas to rebuild a network of tunnels from Gaza to attack Israel.

Myself and Ranking Member Engel have been in those tunnels. I must tell you, reading the account in *The Journal* of the fact that Israel is now going to face a situation where the Quds Forces and the Iranian regime are going to not only rebuild the terror tunnels, but have also made the commitment to transfer the rockets to replenish the inventory, and on top of that, the commitment now, the discussion on the part of Iran to transfer the precision-guided weapons so that Hezbollah will have the opportunity to unleash what used to be an inventory of 10,000 rockets and missiles. When I was there, in Haifa, in 2006, and those rockets were slamming into the city, and there were 600 people in the trauma hospital, there was an inventory of 10,000. Now, thanks to Iran, there is an inventory of over 80,000 of these.

What is it that Iran seeks to do? It needs the hard currency to transfer that capability for GPS guidance for a system that will allow the targeting of those rockets and missiles so that individual targets, individual buildings, the airport, and so forth, can be hit inside Israel. That is what we are talking about when we say that it is going to unleash \$100 billion in capital that is held right now.

Then, Iran is a few steps away from a nuclear weapons program on an industrial scale. It will take a few years, but at the end of that process, as the President has detailed, Iran will be a step away from that.

As Iran grows stronger across the board, the United States will be weaker to respond. By removing economic sanctions, the President is withdrawing one of our most successful, peaceful tools for confronting the Iranian regime. As international investment pours into Iran, there is going to be tremendous political pressure to not upset that apple cart—to keep the agreement going at all costs, no matter what Iranian cheating might be found. Why do I think that? Because we have already seen General Soleimani of the Quds Force take his trek, his trip into Russia to negotiate. We have already seen the announcement of the Fateh 313 rocket, a missile with a range of over 300 miles. That was presented a few weeks ago.

Is anyone speaking out about arms violations with respect to transfer of these types of weapons to Hamas and Hezbollah? No, no, because they don't want to upset the apple cart. Indeed, the administration's pressure—there is a lot of pressure on the IAEA, some of that came from the administration—and that got us a deal with the Iranians being able to self-inspect a key military site, setting a dangerous precedent, frankly, for the future. Because when you set that standard for self-inspections, that becomes the precedent that everybody else wants, including the Iranians the next time they are challenged on the suspicion of some particular military site where they might be doing work. And even if we wanted

to hit back against Iran's cheating, "snapping back" sanctions, I think, under these conditions, especially with the Iranians having a vote on the seven-member consortium of countries that are going to determine this, China having a vote, Russia having a vote, they only have to pick off one more European country that they are doing business with in order to make it very, very difficult for us to have "snapback."

As a group of 200 retired generals and admirals recently concluded,

"This agreement will enable Iran to become far more dangerous, render the Mideast still more unstable, and introduce new threats to American interests, as well as our allies. In our professional opinion, far from being an alternative to war, the [agreement] makes it likely that the war the Iranian regime has waged against us since 1979 will continue, with far higher risks to our national security interests."

Are the temporary restraints on Iran's nuclear program under this agreement worth that cost? President Obama is clearly betting that it is—that Iran will change enough over a short 10 to 15 years to be trusted with what by then will be internationally endorsed bomb-making technology on an industrial scale.

But as we will hear today, that is a bet against history. As one witness recently wrote, Iran's enduring hostility toward us isn't "an accident of historical inertia. "But a choice by Iran—a choice based upon a world view that was founded in large measure on a fiery, theological anti-Americanism, an officially sanctioned and officially disseminated view of Americanism as satanism." That is why we are used to hearing that rhetoric from the Ayatollah that Israel is the little Satan and the United States is the great Satan.

So I now turn to the ranking member, Mr. Eliot Engel of New York, for any opening comments he may have.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling today's hearing. When all is said and done with the Iran deal, I don't think anyone will accuse this committee of skimping on our due diligence. We have heard from administration officials and experts from across the spectrum. So thank you for your leadership, Mr. Chairman, and thoroughness on this issue.

To our witnesses, welcome to the Foreign Affairs Committee. I look forward to your testimony.

I certainly respect everyone's opinions, even though they may differ from mine, but as I announced a month ago, I cannot support the Iran nuclear deal. I have laid out the concerns that led me to that decision, and I will quickly recap.

First of all, I am not persuaded that this deal will give IAEA inspectors the access they need to do their jobs. Between potentially lengthy delays and confusion over inspecting the Parchin military base, this deal leaves too many loopholes for the Iranians to slip through. Unfettered access for inspectors is the only way we can be sure Iran stops its work toward a nuclear weapon, and this deal does not provide unfettered access.

Secondly, I believe the deal gives away too much when it comes to sanctions on advanced conventional weapon and ballistic missile development. As far as I knew, these issues weren't even on the

table, yet with this deal, a few years down the road Iran could be buying advanced weapons and building missiles and still be fully compliant with its obligations. And even if Iran were to violate these provisions early, that violation wouldn't trigger a snapback of economic sanctions.

Which brings me to another concern: What will Iran's leaders do when they again have access to the billions and billions of dollars currently frozen by international sanctions? Even with the sanctions in place, Iran has been the world's largest state sponsor of terrorism. When these new resources pour into Iran, I have no doubt it will mean payday for Hamas, Hezbollah, and other extremist groups around the world. The intentions are pretty clear of leaders who chant "Death to America" and "Death to Israel" just days after concluding an agreement.

And lastly and fundamentally, 15 years from now, this deal allows Iran to produce highly enriched weapons-grade uranium without any restriction. This deal legitimizes Iran as a nuclear threshold state in the year 2030; gives Iran's leaders the green light to build a stockpile of nuclear fuel. If they pursue that course, and I believe they will, it could trigger a nuclear arms race across the region. Even a decade-and-a-half away, that is a risk we cannot take.

Those are my chief concerns, and that is why I can't support this deal. But I don't think anyone here would disagree that it is going to be very difficult to stop this deal from being implemented. So I think it is important for us to start considering, what are the next steps if and when this deal goes through? What will we need to ensure the security of Israel and our other friends and allies in the region, including the Sunni Gulf states? What steps can be taken to prevent Iran's newfound wealth from ending up in terrorist hands?

I know we will hear a lot today from witnesses and my colleagues that this is not the deal we hoped for, and I agree. I do believe this committee now has a responsibility to look ahead and think strategically about what comes next. So I look forward to hearing from our witnesses, Mr. Chairman. I thank you again, and I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Engel. And this morning—

Mr. CONNOLLY. Would the ranking member yield before he yields back his time?

Mr. ROYCE. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank the chair.

Given the fact that both the chairman and the ranking member have talked about their concerns about the deal, just for the record, there are a number of us who actually have a different opinion. I believe this is a vigorous and enforceable agreement. I believe it is the only path to peace. I believe it rolls back the nuclear capability of Iran for a substantial period of time that gives us time to make sure we have an even more long-lasting agreement.

I believe it is enforceable. I believe it is verifiable. I believe it is a robust agreement. I believe it is one we don't need to apologize for. And the choice is stark. They are within 2 to 3 months of developing a bomb or 15 years. I choose the latter enthusiastically.

And I thank the ranking member for his courtesy and the chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Connolly.

This morning we are pleased to be joined by a distinguished panel with a range of views before the committee.

General Chuck Wald served as the former Deputy Commander of the U.S. European Command, overseeing all U.S. forces operating across 91 countries in Europe, Africa, Russia, parts of Asia and the Middle East, and most of the Atlantic Ocean.

Admiral William Fallon served as the former Commander of the U.S. Central Command, where he directed all U.S. military operations in the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Horn of Africa.

Vice Admiral John Bird served in a variety of positions, including as the former Commander of the Seventh Fleet and as the Director of Navy Staff.

Mr. Leon Wieseltier is the Isaiah Berlin Senior Fellow in Culture and Policy at the Brookings Institution. He is a senior editor and critic at The Atlantic, for which he recently wrote an article titled "The Iran Deal and the Rut of History."

And so without objection, the witnesses' full prepared statements will be made part of the record. Members will have 5 calendar days to submit statements and questions and any extraneous material for the record.

And, General Wald, I would ask you if you could please summarize your remarks.

**STATEMENT OF GENERAL CHUCK WALD, USAF, RETIRED
(FORMER DEPUTY COMMANDER, U.S. EUROPEAN COMMAND)**

General WALD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Engel, and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the implications of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

I served in the Air Force as a pilot and air commander for over three decades. I have commanded air operations in Bosnia and Afghanistan, and I am intimately familiar with the U.S. allies and adversaries in the Middle East, as well as the capabilities the U.S. military uses to protect one and deter and defeat the other.

Two weeks ago, JINSA's Gemunder Center for Defense and Strategy released a report from its new Iran Strategy Council, which I co-chaired, in which Vice Admiral Bird is also a member, analyzing the Iran deal's potentially grave repercussions. Our findings are straightforward. JCPOA does not reduce the need for a robust military presence in the Middle East, nor does it preclude the possibility of a military confrontation with Iran. Instead, it creates a much more difficult strategic environment for the United States to operate in over the next 15 years, if not longer.

Let me explain how we came to that conclusion. First, the deal does not prevent a nuclear Iran. It merely kicks the centrifuge issue down the road for 15 years when the agreement's major nuclear restrictions lapse. At that point, according to President Obama, Iran will have advanced centrifuges that enrich uranium fairly rapidly, and at that point the breakout times would have shrunk almost down to zero. Should Tehran decide to sprint for nuclear weapons capability, something that it can do in weeks, if not days, U.S. options for preventing a nuclear Iran will be extremely limited.

Second, Iran can still become a nuclear threshold power. This does not remove the need to maintain a long-term credible military option against Iran's nuclear program. This is why President Obama has also cautioned that if 15 or 20 years from now Iran tries to build a bomb, this deal ensures the United States will have the same options available to stop weapons programs as we have today, including, if necessary, military options.

Third, the deal actually increases the need for the United States to project power in the region so to protect its interests and allies from potential Iranian interference. Vice Admiral Bird will testify, JCPOA grants Iran access to resources and technology with which to modernize its Armed Forces and continue to pursue the pursuit of hegemonic and destabilizing activities in the Middle East.

This leads to the question: If continued or increased U.S. military presence in the Middle East will be required under this deal, what will the strategic environment that we will be operating look like?

I believe two main dynamics will shape the ability of the United States military to project power and operate in the Middle East. First, the decline in U.S. military capabilities, in strength, force structure, readiness, and modernization, that is already happening and will only get worse if sequestration, the decades of cuts to the defense budget, are allowed to continue for the remaining 6 years. Second, the erosion of U.S. credibility in the eyes of our Middle Eastern allies as a result of our accepting a deal that they view as fundamentally dangerous.

Combined, these dynamics mean the United States may still have the military option when JCPOA expires, but it will face a far more dangerous and difficult one than it is today. In sum, this deal creates a strategic environment in which Iran can pursue nuclear weapons capability at a much lower level of risk.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of General Wald follows:]

Statement of GEN USAF (ret.) Charles F. Wald
Co-Chair, JINSA-commissioned Iran Strategy Council

Hearing on the Implications of a Nuclear Agreement with Iran (Part IV)
United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building
September 9, 2015

Introduction

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Engel, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and discuss how the strategic environment in which the U.S. military operates will change, over both the near- and long-term, under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). My decades of service as a pilot and as an air commander in the U.S. Air Force, including commanding operations in Bosnia and Afghanistan, have made me familiar with U.S. allies and adversaries in the Middle East as well as the capabilities the U.S. military uses to protect the one, and deter and defeat the other. I co-chair the new Iran Strategy Council, of which Vice Admiral Bird is also a member, an organization of former senior U.S. military officials commissioned by JINSA's Gemunder Center for Defense and Strategy. Its mission is to help U.S. policymakers analyze and respond to the Iran deal's potentially grave repercussions.

We released a [report](#) last week assessing that while the JCPOA will strengthen Iran and its proxies, it will also reduce U.S. credibility and alienate it from its Middle Eastern allies at a time that U.S. military capability is already being reduced by sequestration.¹ This agreement will not prevent a nuclear Iran, but rather allow it to become a nuclear threshold state when its major restrictions lapse in no more than 15 years. This agreement also will enable Iran to become more powerful and expand its influence and destabilizing activities – across the Middle East and possibly directly threatening the U.S. homeland. In other words, the JCPOA does not reduce the need for a robust U.S. military presence in the Middle East, nor does it preclude the possibility of a military confrontation with Iran. Instead, it creates a much more difficult strategic environment for the United States to operate in over the next 15 years as Iran becomes economically stronger, regionally more powerful and militarily more capable. Simply put, the United States is in a far better position to prevent a nuclear Iran today, even by military means if necessary, than when the JCPOA expires.

JCPOA Consequences for U.S. Strategic Posture

¹ Gemunder Center Iran Strategy Council, "Assessment of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action: Strategic Consequences for U.S. National Security," September 2, 2015.

President Obama has made clear that the JCPOA does not preclude the need to maintain a robust military deterrent against Iran.

The president has acknowledged, and nuclear experts have confirmed, that as the agreement's major nuclear restrictions lapse by year 15, Iran will "have advanced centrifuges that enrich uranium fairly rapidly, and at that point the breakout times would have shrunk almost down to zero." At that point, should the regime in Tehran decide to sprint for a nuclear weapons capability, U.S. options for preventing a nuclear Iran will be extremely limited. This is why President Obama has also cautioned, "if 15 or 20 years from now, Iran tries to build a bomb, this deal ensures that the United States will have ... the same options available to stop a weapons program as we have today, including – if necessary – military options."²

This is perhaps the most important element of the deal to understand: it does not remove the need to maintain a long-term credible military option against Iran's nuclear program to continue meeting the fundamental policy objective of preventing a nuclear Iran. Moreover, because the JCPOA grants Iran access to resources and technology with which to modernize its armed forces and continue its pursuit of hegemonic and destabilizing activities in the Middle East, the deal increases the need for the United States to project power in the region so as to protect its interests and allies from potential Iranian interference. But if continued or increased U.S. military presence in the Middle East will be required, what will the strategic environment that we will be operating in look like under the JCPOA?

I believe two main dynamics will shape the ability of the United States military to project power and operate in the Middle East. First, the decline in U.S. military capabilities – end strength, force structure, readiness and modernization – that is already happening and will only get worse if sequestration, the decade of cuts to the defense budget, are allowed to continue for the remaining six years. Second, the erosion of U.S. credibility in the eyes of our Middle Eastern allies as a result of our accepting a deal that they view as fundamentally dangerous. Combined, these dynamics mean that the United States might still have the military option when the JCPOA expires, but it will face a far more dangerous and difficult option than it would today. This deal creates a strategic environment in which Iran can pursue nuclear weapons capability at a much lower level of risk.

U.S. Capability

The United States military is and remains the most capable fighting force in the world. However, it is severely overtaxed on a global level and under-resourced going forward. That is unlikely to change anytime soon. In absolute terms, the U.S. armed forces are vastly superior to those of Iran and will remain so 15 years from now. But the relative capabilities between the two militaries is already shrinking, and will only decline further over the JCPOA's term.

² "Full text: Obama gives a speech about the Iran nuclear deal," *Washington Post*, August 5, 2015.

Taken purely from a budget perspective, Iran's defense spending will almost certainly increase over the next decade due to significant influx of resources generated by the lifting of sanctions. However, U.S. military spending has seen sharp cuts during the last three years and is slated to suffer additional reductions. In 2011, Congress enacted close to \$500 billion in cuts to defense spending over the succeeding ten years. It also set in place a process, known as sequestration, which forced another almost \$500 billion in reductions. In sum, by 2021 the Department of Defense will have received nearly \$1 trillion less than it projected was necessary to defend the country.

Sequestration, according to General Ray Odierno, the recently retired Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, "will challenge us to meet even our current level of commitments to our allies and partners around the world.... Ultimately, sequestration limits strategic flexibility and requires us to hope we are able to predict the future with great accuracy, something we have never been able to do." General Dunford issued a similarly dire warning about the impact of these cuts: "The readiness of the Joint Force, the modernization of the Joint Force, will suffer what I would describe, and without exaggeration, as catastrophic consequences."³

Seen from a capabilities perspective, sequestration will be even more damaging to the ability of the United States to project force in the Middle East. The capabilities that will be most important in confronting Iranian aggression and potentially preventing a nuclear Iran – long-range strike, standoff, forward staging and counter-A2/AD capabilities – are among those that will suffer the greatest decline. "The missions that have the highest risks," Adm. Jonathan Greenert, the Chief of Naval Operations, told Congress, "are those missions requiring us to deter and defeat aggression, and the mission to project power despite an anti-access, area denial challenge.... In terms of warfighting, the sequestered Navy of 2020 would be left in a position where it could not execute those two missions I referred to."⁴

In only the most visible demonstration of sequestration's impact on the Navy, the aircraft carrier *USS Theodore Roosevelt* will depart the Persian Gulf this fall and will not be replaced for another several months, marking the first time in years that a carrier will not be in the region. As an Air Force combat pilot and air commander, I know full well the unique power projection capabilities and deterrent effect that an aircraft carrier battle group provides the United States. To deprive ourselves of such a vital tool in such a crucial region at such a pivotal moment is indefensible.

U.S. airpower faces similar challenges from sequestration. According to General Mark Welsh, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, "when we deployed to Operation Desert Storm in 1990, the Air Force had 188 fighter squadrons. Today, we have 54, and we're headed to 49 in the next couple of years. In 1990, there were 511,000 active duty airmen alone. Today, we have 200,000

³ Amaani Lyle, "Sequestration Threatens Army Readiness," *DoD News*, January 28, 2015; "Joint Chiefs of Staff Confirmation Hearing," C-SPAN, July 9, 2015.

⁴ "Statement of Admiral Jonathan Greenert Before the Senate Armed Services Committee on the Impact of Sequestration on National Defense," Chief of Naval Operations – U.S. Navy, January 28, 2015.

fewer than that. And as those numbers came down, the operational tempo went up.” Of those 54 squadrons, “just under 50 percent ... are fully combat ready,” and many of the aircraft in operation are decades old.⁵

These adverse effects have occurred over just three years of sequestration. With little apparent political appetite to reverse these cuts, there are likely to be six more years to come. As the total number of U.S. naval and air assets declines and the end strength of our ground troops is slashed, there will be fewer assets available for stationing in and deployment to the Middle East. Moreover, those assets that will be available to U.S. commanders will be older, less frequently serviced and operated by personnel with fewer training hours than today. Nor will there be resources available to invest in defensive measures, whether for our allies or our homeland, to protect against Iranian threats such as missile attacks, electromagnetic pulse (EMP) attacks or terrorism. At the same time, Iran will be ramping up its military expenditures and modernizing its capabilities.

In other words, during the course of the JCPOA, as Iran gains the resources and access to develop its military capabilities, those of the United States will be significantly reduced. As Iran bristles with more and newer arms, the United States will have fewer and older ones to counter them. Iranian influence in the region will increase in direct proportion to the perceived decline in American capability.

Should the worst happen – should Iran threaten the security of our allies, should it decide, after 15 years, to sprint for a nuclear weapons capability – the U.S. armed forces will rise to challenge, but they will do so with less manpower, fewer capabilities, more antiquated platforms and a lower level of readiness than they have now or have had in a very long time. Such action would also occur against the backdrop of a much more heavily militarized, and perhaps even nuclearized, Middle East, heightening the danger of miscalculation and spillover conflict.

U.S. Credibility

Credibility is the bedrock of deterrence. American credibility flows not only from the prowess of U.S. armed forces, but also from the perception, of both our allies and enemies, that those capabilities will be used to protect U.S. interests, counter aggression and defend allies anywhere in the world, at any time. If U.S. military strength or commitment to alliances is seen as weakened, our adversaries will feel emboldened and our partners will feel compelled to seek protection elsewhere.

With U.S. military capability visibly deteriorating under sequestration, our credibility is already coming under question. Therefore, it will be even more important for U.S. leaders to remain sensitive to the perception of U.S. commitment to its regional allies and determination to protect them, lest it erode any further.

⁵ David Alexander, “Stressed, shrinking Air Force needs more funding: U.S. officials,” Reuters, February 27, 2015.

Some lawmakers have argued that rejecting the JCPOA would weaken the deterrent value of the U.S. military option by alienating European allies. Perhaps, but our Middle Eastern partners appear much more concerned about what accepting the deal communicates about the value of U.S. security guarantees. Those perceptions, whether or not they are true, matter much more for the stability and peace of the region.

Preventing a nuclear Iran has been a priority U.S. national security objective for over a decade. It has been paired with, and integral to, a more comprehensive regional strategy, one that has prioritized defeating terrorist threats and guaranteeing the security of U.S. allies. Some U.S. allies have made clear they believe this deal will not prevent a nuclear Iran and, that by proceeding with the JCPOA, the United States is disrupting the regional balance of power and endangering them. As described above, other regional partners have noted that the deal empowers Iran to redouble its destabilizing regional activities, making the Middle East a more dangerous place. There is anger – even a sense of betrayal – among U.S. allies in the region.

Regardless of their accuracy, these perceptions that the JCPOA entails a reversal of U.S. commitments to protect our allies are dangerous for several reasons. First, if allowed to persist, they will drive these partners to seek security by other means. This could mean taking matters into their own hands, as Israel previously has done or Saudi Arabia decided to do earlier this year by unilaterally launching an air campaign against Iranian-backed rebels in Yemen. Such actions, if not backed by the overwhelming force of the U.S. military, could spark reprisals that spiral into wider regional conflict. Alternatively, our regional allies might seek other guarantors of their security. Whether this means accepting Iranian hegemony or allying with other powers – such as Russia or China – the result would be detrimental to U.S. influence and interests in the region.

Second, U.S. ability to project power in the Middle East depends, at least in part, on the cooperation and support of these allies. Basing and overflight rights are critical to maintaining and deploying a deterrent force. The perception that we are no longer committed to our allies' security could risk the revocation of those rights and spark a vicious cycle of destabilization. If a country feels that U.S. forces based in its territory will not be used to defend its interests and security, why allow the forces to be there at all? If U.S. forces lose their access to bases, airspace and territory, making it harder to operate in the region, their ability to defend those same partners will be compromised.

Our Middle Eastern allies have made perfectly clear what the JCPOA means to them: the weakening of U.S. security guarantees and reversal of decades of U.S. regional security policy. The mere fact that such perceptions persist, regardless of their veracity, undermines U.S. credibility, threatening to turn them into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Challenges for the United States

Maintaining our position in the Middle East to prevent a nuclear Iran will demand increasing resources, posture and attention, far more than is necessary today. We must therefore must face the realities of the agreement with immediate action along several key lines of effort.

First, we must strengthen fraying ties with regional allies through sustained multilateral engagement to assemble a regional coalition to hold the line against Tehran. This demands greater cooperation with U.S. partners in the region in the realms of missile defense, intelligence, air and maritime security.

And we must preserve our country's military edge against Iran with recapitalization, investment and modernization of our forces. At a minimum this would mean returning the defense budget to baseline levels requested by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates in 2012, and as recommended by the bipartisan National Defense Panel last year.⁶ These additional funds should be invested in rebuilding and retraining what is becoming a hollow force, as well as modernizing those capabilities most essential to deterring – and if necessary defeating – the growing threat from Iran under the JCPOA.

I thank you Mr. Chairman for my time, and I look forward to the Committee's questions.

⁶ United States Institute of Peace, *Ensuring a Strong U.S. Defense for the Future: The National Defense Panel Review of the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington, DC: USIP, 2014), p. xi.

Chairman ROYCE. Admiral Fallon.

**STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL WILLIAM FALLON, USN, RETIRED
(FORMER COMMANDER, U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND)**

Admiral FALLON. Mr. Chairman, Congressman Engel, members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to address this distinguished body and offer my perspective on this nuclear arrangement with Iran and related questions.

I think this is an important issue because Iran has accumulated a very large quantity of enriched uranium and is, by many accounts, near the threshold of nuclear weapons capability. This emerging capacity, when coupled with a virulent anti-Western rhetoric and a long record of malign activities, presents a very real threat to U.S. interests.

Iranian bad behavior abroad, spearheaded by the IRGC Quds Force, and executed mainly by their proxies, has fomented regional instability and attacked U.S. personnel and interests around the world, actions which I witnessed firsthand in Lebanon in the early 1980s and in Iraq and Afghanistan when I was Commander of U.S. CENTCOM in the last decade. I am under no illusions regarding Iranian Government behavior since the Islamic revolution, and I believe that some elements in that country would be very pleased to possess nuclear weapons.

It is precisely this near-term potential to achieve nuclear weapons capability that I believe presents the most serious challenge with Iran. Notwithstanding many grievances and intolerable activity by the Iranian agents in places around the world, the most pressing issue for America, Israel, and our Middle Eastern allies is the very real possibility that Iran could soon acquire a nuclear weapon.

To address this threat, representatives of the international community have been negotiating for many months with one key objective: To stop Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. The resulting joint plan, in my opinion, offers a good chance to do just that and is far superior to the status quo alternative which would leave Iran with a massive stockpile of enriched uranium, no firsthand scrutiny of ongoing related activities, and if this deal is rejected, new motivation to accelerate their efforts.

I have scrutinized this agreement very carefully and I support it with reservations and I recommend your approval of the plan. Frankly, I was surprised but pleased that so many diverse interests represented in the negotiations could actually coalesce an agreement on a document that on balance I think is a reasonable way forward.

But I want to make perfectly clear about the most important reality: Neither we, nor the Iranians, really trust each other to actualize the features of this deal, and that is very important to keep in mind as we go forward.

A positive aspect of this arrangement is that after more than 36 years of open hostility and a lack of substantive discussion on any issue, the two sides came together and agreed a way ahead of utmost importance. The negative is the devil in the detail: The implementation is going to require close scrutiny and verification. I think the most important strength of the deal is the broad inter-

national agreement and the priority of stopping Iran's nuclear weapons.

There are many points you can read in my testimony that I think effectively block the uranium path to a weapon. By sabotaging the Arak heavy water reactor, it basically sets back the plutonium option for a substantial amount of time. There are other issues that have been addressed variously and will be addressed, I think, by the IAEA. You can have your own opinions about those.

I think that the biggest weakness of the agreement is that there doesn't appear to be any practically effective way to monitor very small-scale Iranian misbehavior should they choose to continue or resume it. Likewise, the full resolution of the PMD suspicions is really unlikely because it would probably depend on Iranian admission of past violations of the NPT and the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement. And historically, the IAEA has not been seen as the most aggressive entity in pursuing scofflaws.

Regarding long-term implications of the agreement on regional stability, I think there is good potential for positive development. The most important issue, the imminent threat of an Iranian nuclear weapon, has forestalled easing the high anxiety that exists in the region and with Israel. Suspension of sanctions will increase economic activity and personal travel, boosting interaction with the Iranian population, resulting in pressure to normalize state-to-state relationships.

The potential for confidence building and maybe even trust at some point between Iran and the international community as implementation proceeds could initiate a more pragmatic political dynamic inside Iran to address the very real unrest and frustrations of the population, the majority of whom are under 30 years of age.

Much is going to depend on Iranian behavior toward its neighbors and whether it continues to instigate the Shia minorities to confront Sunni leadership in the Gulf countries. In Iraq, there is certainly some overlap in U.S. and Iranian interests, but clearly their priority is to maintain influence with Baghdad.

In addressing Iran's benign activities globally, we should make sure at every opportunity that cooperation with Iran on this comprehensive current nuclear weapons deal in no way will excuse or cause us to ignore Iranian bad behavior in other areas. Strengthening our ties to the GCC, encouraging cooperative security efforts by these nations, supported by consistent engagement by U.S. forces, should reassure these countries of American resolve and disabuse them of any notion that we may be aligning ourselves with Iranian interests in the region.

The significant current disagreement between the U.S. and Israel regarding the approach to Iran is recognized as a difference in priority of national interest, should be addressed with a continued strong U.S. commitment to Israeli security.

In summary, this joint plan is a unique opportunity to address one of the most pressing issues of international security and stability today. The agreement has been painstakingly negotiated in concert with allies and other parties, and I believe offers the most reasonable and likely way ahead to forestall an Iranian nuclear weapon for the next decade or more. It may not satisfy every aspiration, but I have heard no credible alternative proposal.

American initiative and persistence enabled the parties to come to an agreement, and continued leadership will be essential for successful implementation. I recommend congressional support with continued engagement to enable implementation and verification of the many complex and critical aspects of the agreement.

Thank you, and I will be pleased to answer any specific questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Fallon follows:]

9 September 2015

Testimony before House Committee on Foreign Affairs

William J. Fallon, Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)

Mr. Chairman, Congressman Engel, members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to address this distinguished body and to offer my perspective on the Nuclear Agreement with Iran, potential long-term implications of the deal on regional stability and how to effectively respond to Iran's global malign activities.

This is an important issue because Iran has accumulated a very large quantity of enriched uranium and is, by many accounts, near the threshold of nuclear weapons capability. This emerging capacity, when coupled with virulent anti-Western rhetoric and a long record of malign activities, presents a very real threat to U.S. interests

Iranian bad behavior abroad, spearheaded by the IRGC Qods Force and executed mainly by their proxies, has fomented regional instability and attacked U.S. personnel and interests around the world, actions which I witnessed firsthand in Lebanon in the early 1980s and in Iraq and Afghanistan when I was Commander, U.S. CENTCOM. I am under no illusions regarding Iranian government behavior since the Islamic Revolution and believe that some elements in that country would be very pleased to possess nuclear weapons.

It is precisely this near term potential to achieve a nuclear weapons capability that presents the most serious challenge with Iran. Notwithstanding many grievances and intolerable activity by Iranian agents in places around the world, the most pressing issue for America, Israel and our Middle East allies, is the very real possibility that Iran may soon acquire a nuclear weapon.

To address this looming threat, representatives of the international community (U.S., UK, France, Germany, China, Russia and the EU) have been negotiating with Iran for many months with one key objective, to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. The resulting Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in my opinion, offers a good chance to do just that and is far superior to the status quo alternative, which would leave Iran with a massive stockpile of enriched uranium, no first hand scrutiny of ongoing nuclear related activities and if this Deal is rejected, new motivation to accelerate their efforts.

I have scrutinized the agreement, support it and recommend your approval of the JCPOA. Frankly, I was positively surprised but pleased that the many diverse interests represented in the negotiations could coalesce in agreement in a document that on balance gives us a very reasonable way forward. But, I want to be perfectly clear about a most important reality; neither we, nor the Iranians really trust each other to actualize all features of the Deal.

A positive aspect of the agreement is that after more than 36 years of open hostility and lack of substantive discussion on any issue, the two sides came to an agreed way ahead in an area of utmost importance. The negative is the devil in the detail and implementation will require close scrutiny and verification at every step.

The most important strength of the Deal is the broad international agreement on the priority of stopping Iran's march toward nuclear weapons and the diverse group of countries which have signed and pledged to support it. Other key points are the removal of 98% of the enriched uranium stockpile and dismantling of the majority of the centrifuges. These two steps, in concert with close scrutiny and verification by the IAEA of all known nuclear related sites in Iran, along with all aspects of the nuclear supply chain, will effectively block a uranium path to a weapon. Neutralizing the Arak heavy water reactor will likewise eliminate the second (plutonium) path to a bomb.

The agreement will put in place a rigorous inspection and verification program with, in many cases, on site, around the clock monitoring which will last for varying time frames from 10 years to perpetuity. The technical aspects of the agreement are comprehensive and well thought out. To address past and present areas of concern, collectively known as Possible Military Dimensions (PMD) of Iranian activity, the IAEA and Iran have signed a "Roadmap for Clarification of Past and Present Outstanding Issues". This confidential (between Iran and the IAEA) agreement and a separate arrangement on the Parchin site must be concluded to the satisfaction of the IAEA prior to Implementation Day and any sanctions relief.

A weakness of the Agreement is that there does not appear to be any practically effective way to monitor or verify small scale Iranian misbehavior, should they choose to continue or resume non-nuclear, weapons related activities such as

warhead or centrifuge development. Likewise, full resolution of PMD suspicions is unlikely as it would depend on Iranian admission of possible past violations of the NPT and Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement. And historically, the IAEA has not been seen as the most aggressive entity in pursuing scofflaws.

The up to 24 day access procedure is a cause for concern but will only apply to undeclared and suspicious sites, with immediate access available at known sites. However, trace amounts of fissionable material are very difficult to hide, and the "Snap Back" provision of the Agreement should be a powerful disincentive to counter potential violations.

Regarding long term implications of the agreement on regional stability, I assess there is good potential for positive development. The most important issue, the imminent threat of an Iranian Nuclear Weapon, is forestalled, easing high anxiety in the Region and with Israel.

The suspension of sanctions will increase economic activity and personal travel in the region, boosting interaction with the Iranian population, resulting in pressure to normalize state to state relationships. The potential for confidence building, and possibly even trust, between Iran and the international community as implementation proceeds, could initiate a more pragmatic political dynamic inside Iran to address the unrest and frustrations of the population, the majority under age 30.

Much will depend on Iranian behavior toward its neighbors and whether it continues to instigate the Shia minorities to confront the Sunni majority leadership in many Gulf countries. In Iraq, there is some overlap in interests as U.S. and Iranian forces assist the government of PM Haider al-Abadi in the struggle with ISIS but Iran seems determined to maintain strong influence with Baghdad.

The Middle East, an area of high interest to us for many reasons, continues to be buffeted by challenges which have vexed years of U.S. attempts to improve stability in the area. Nonetheless, we should continue to engage in the region, using all aspects of national power, but with the understanding that we are not likely to be successful by mandating U.S. solutions. People in the region are sooner or later going to have to step up and address the issues which torment and divide them. We can and should assist but we are not going to resolve their problems.

In addressing Iran's malign activities globally, we should make clear at every opportunity that cooperation with Iran in the current Nuclear Weapons issue will not in any way excuse or cause us to ignore Iranian bad behavior in other areas. Having demonstrated our sincerity in the JCPOA negotiation and the example of benefit from international cooperation, we could explore additional opportunities of mutual interest while maintaining vigilance and a firm line on potentially destabilizing Iranian actions.

Strengthening our ties to the GCC and encouraging collective security efforts by these nations, supported with consistent engagement by U.S. forces should reassure these countries of American resolve and disabuse them of any notion that we might be aligning with Iranian interests in the region.

The significant current disagreement between the U.S. and Israel regarding the approach to Iran is recognized as a difference in the priority of national interests and should be addressed with a continued strong U.S. commitment to Israeli security.

In summary, the JCPOA is a unique opportunity to address one of the most pressing issues of international security and stability. This agreement has been painstakingly negotiated in concert with allies and other parties and I believe offers the most reasonable and likely way ahead to forestall an Iranian nuclear weapon for the next decade or more. It may not satisfy every aspiration, but I have heard no credible alternative proposal. American initiative and persistence enabled the parties to come to agreement and our continued leadership will be essential for successful implementation. I recommend Congressional support with continued engagement to enable implementation and verification of the many complex and critical aspects of the agreement.

Thank you. I will be pleased to address specific questions you may have.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Admiral.
Admiral Bird.

**STATEMENT OF VICE ADMIRAL JOHN BIRD, USN, RETIRED
(FORMER COMMANDER, U.S. SEVENTH FLEET)**

Admiral BIRD. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Engel, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. It is an honor and a privilege to be here joined by such distinguished and highly accomplished professionals on this panel. My decades of service as first a career submarine officer, and then a fleet commander of the United States Navy afforded me the experience and expertise to understand potential threats posed by adversaries like Iran, especially in the maritime environment.

Along with General Wald, I am a member of the new Iran Strategy Council, an organization of former senior U.S. military officials sponsored by JINSA's Gemunder Center for Defense and Strategy. As General Wald stated, we released a report last week assessing that the JCPOA will make the United States and its allies less secure and military confrontation with Iran and its proxies more likely.

Specifically and fundamentally, the JCPOA will allow Iran to become a nuclear threshold state no later than 15 years. During that time, it will enable Iran to become more powerful and expand its influence not only across the Middle East, and negatively impact U.S. national security. The JCPOA's lifting of economic sanctions will provide to Iran more resources for military spending, while its ending of the U.N. arms embargo will give Iran access to advanced technologies and weapons from abroad, most likely from China and Russia.

Iran will likely use these opportunities to augment its asymmetric capabilities to include anti-access area denial strategy to deter or prevent our military forces from operating effectively in the Middle East. This could include more accurate antiship missiles, attack craft, submarines, mines, advanced air systems, UAVs, longer-range radars, enhanced EW and CW capabilities. In short order, Iran could credibly threaten to seal off the Straits of Hormuz, block the flow of oil through the Persian Gulf, and target our military forces and those of our allies. And once sanctions end on its ballistic missile program, Iran could more easily develop weapons capable of reaching targets in the Middle East and beyond, including Europe.

Additionally, the JCPOA will allow Iran to funnel more money and weapons to destabilizing forces across the region, from the Assad regime in Syria, to Shia militias, chiefly Hezbollah, to expanded involvement in Yemen and other strategic parts of the Arabian Peninsula that are vulnerable to sectarian conflict. Therefore, the JCPOA will aggravate sectarian conflict, trigger nuclear and conventional proliferation, and strain ties with our regional allies.

Meanwhile, sequestration is diminishing our military's ability to deter and respond to global threats, including increased Iran aggression. Maintaining our position in the Middle East to prevent a nuclear Iran will demand increasing resources, posture, and attention, far more than is provided today.

To Ranking Member Engel's point, now that we have the agreement, what next?

First, we need to sustain multilateral engagement and enhance it with our Middle East allies to assemble a regional coalition to hold the line against Iran, built on greater cooperation on missile defense, intelligence, and air and maritime superiority.

Second, significant diplomatic effort must be devoted to convincing Iran's most likely suppliers, mainly Russia and China, not to sell Iran advanced weapons.

Third, we must develop a comprehensive national strategy to deal with Iran's growing adversarial ambitions.

Finally, we must preserve our country's military edge against Iran with recapitalization, investment, and modernization of our forces.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for my time, and I look forward to the committee's questions.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Bird follows:]

Statement of VADM USN (ret.) John M. Bird
Member, JINSA-commissioned Iran Strategy Council

Hearing on the Implications of a Nuclear Agreement with Iran (Part IV)
United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building
September 9, 2015

Introduction

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Engel, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and speak to the military and strategic implications of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) for the United States and its allies in the Middle East. My decades of service as first a career submarine officer and then as a fleet commander in the U.S. Navy have afforded me the experience and expertise to understand the potential threats posed by adversaries like Iran, especially in the maritime environment. Along with General Wald, I am a member of the new Iran Strategy Council, an organization of former senior U.S. military officials commissioned by JINSA's Gemunder Center for Defense and Strategy. Its mission is to help U.S. policymakers analyze and respond to the Iran deal's potentially grave repercussions.

Last week, we released a [report](#) assessing that the JCPOA will make the United States and its allies less safe, and military confrontation with Iran and its proxies more likely.¹ This agreement will not prevent a nuclear Iran, but rather allow it to become a nuclear threshold state when its major restrictions lapse in no more than 15 years. This agreement also will enable Iran to become more powerful and expand its influence and destabilizing activities – across the Middle East and possibly directly threatening the U.S. homeland – at the same time that sequestration diminishes the ability of the United States to respond to global threats, including increased Iranian aggression. Consequently, the strategic environment will grow much more treacherous in the next 15 years as Iran becomes economically stronger, regionally more powerful and militarily more capable. Simply put, the United States is in a far better position to limit Iranian aggression and prevent a nuclear Iran today, even by military means if necessary, than when the JCPOA expires.

JCPOA Consequences for Iran's Strategic Posture

Beyond nuclear capabilities, the JCPOA has implications for Iran's conventional military capabilities and its support for proxies. Overall, the agreement will provide the expansionist

¹ Gemunder Center Iran Strategy Council, "Assessment of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action: Strategic Consequences for U.S. National Security," September 2, 2015.

regime in Tehran with access to resources, technology and international arms markets required to bolster its offensive military capabilities in the vital Persian Gulf region. Further, it will allow Tehran to develop long-range ballistic missiles and other major weapons systems. Finally, this deal will also enable Iran to increase its support for its well-established terrorist and insurgent proxies.

Improved Iran Military Capabilities

Beginning in the short term, Iran will be able to revitalize its defense industrial base, even if it devotes only a fraction of the \$100 billion or more that will be unfrozen as part of the agreement to military spending. Over the medium term, the removal of economic sanctions will generate increased revenues that the regime can channel into its defense budget, and the lifting of the United Nations arms embargo will allow it to acquire other advanced technologies and weapons from abroad. And, once sanctions against its ballistic missile program sunset, Iran could more easily develop weapons capable of reaching targets in the Middle East and beyond – including Europe and the United States.

For the foreseeable future, Iran is unlikely to funnel these new resources into sophisticated conventional capabilities. Indeed, it has gleaned the clear lesson that it cannot hope to match the United States in a direct military confrontation, either now or in 15 years when the capability gap between the two militaries is likely to have shrunk. However, Iran also knows the United States relies heavily on unfettered access to close-in bases across the Middle East to keep the region's vital and vulnerable sea lanes open, conduct combat operations and deter aggression against its allies. Therefore, Tehran has spent more than a decade pursuing a strategy – commonly referred to as “anti-access/area denial,” or A2/AD – to disrupt or deter the United States from projecting superior forces into the region, or to prevent those forces from operating effectively if deployed.²

Our Council expects Iran to use the opportunity provided by JCPOA to augment its capabilities for carrying out this A2/AD strategy. Iran could buy more of the systems and platforms it currently deploys. This would include its stocks of short and medium-range ballistic missiles – already the largest in the Middle East – as well as its growing arsenal of cruise missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), and its sizable fleet of fast attack craft and submarines. This would be on top of the advanced S-300 air defenses Iran already is set to acquire from Russia at the end of this year.

Iran could also take advantage of the international access and windfall revenues provided by the JCPOA to upgrade crucial existing capabilities. Specifically: improved precision guidance systems for missiles, better UAVs and longer-range radars, as well as new missile boats, submarines, mobile missile launchers, air defenses or multirole aircraft. It could also enhance

² For an in-depth treatment of Iran's A2/AD strategy, see: Mark Gunzinger with Chris Dougherty, *Outside-In: Operating from Range to Defeat Iran's Anti-Access and Area-Denial Threats* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2012).

its stealth and electronic and cyber warfare capabilities using new technologies from abroad. Ultimately, Iran might also invest in entirely new weaponry, to project power not only along the Persian Gulf, but across the Middle East and beyond. This could include long-range strike, satellite, airlift and sealift capabilities as well as the development of long-range ballistic missiles.

The A2/AD concept and strategy are not uniquely employed by Iran. In fact China has proven itself very adept at this strategy, and is evolving new and more capable weapon systems that further enhance this strategy at an alarming pace. To a lesser extent, North Korea is making strides here as well. Unfortunately, both North Korea and Iran have become students, and likely customers, of China's strategy and capabilities. Russia could be another major supporter, particularly of Iran, since Moscow is not reluctant to sell high-end arms to any willing buyer.

With these capabilities and connections, the A2/AD threat from Iran would become increasingly severe – a problem aggravated by the challenging geography of the Middle East with its smaller bodies of water and their associated straits. In short order Iran could credibly threaten to seal off the Persian Gulf at the Strait of Hormuz, degrade U.S. freedom of maneuver and military lines of communication, challenge U.S. air supremacy, block the flow of oil through the Persian Gulf, and target naval and commercial vessels, military bases, energy infrastructure and other militarily-critical sites around the region.

Increased Support for Proxies

This is not just about conventional military spending. The JCPOA also will provide Iran greater resources to funnel to Shia militias – chiefly Hezbollah – and other dangerous proxy groups across the region, including Hamas. The regime's official defense spending was only \$16 billion in 2014. While the real figure – including military support for Hezbollah and Syria's Assad regime – is likely much higher, the infusion of new revenues in the coming years will create opportunities to significantly expand involvement throughout the Middle East and possibly farther afield.

Even with sanctions in place, Tehran has steadily deepened its involvement in the Syrian Civil War. With sanctions lifted, Iran's leadership could try to tip the scales decisively in Assad's favor after years of stalemate. As the arms embargo is relaxed, Iran could also supply Hezbollah with increasingly sophisticated capabilities, thereby raising the risk and potential costs of conflict with Israel.

In Iraq, the Iranian regime could further consolidate its control over the Shia-dominated central government, security forces and the most powerful sectarian militias. This would put some of the Middle East's most productive oilfields in an exclusively Iranian sphere of influence and fracture Iraq into smaller states. Iran could also escalate its efforts to foment or capitalize on internal sectarian conflict in the Arabian Peninsula, as it has recently in Yemen.

The strategic consequences for the United States and its allies could be severe. Combined with

improved military capabilities, these developments could enable the Iranian regime to realize a long-held ambition to bring the region's Shia populations into its orbit and create a "Shia crescent" from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean. This would have the potential to erase the decades-old balance of power between Iran and its adversaries in the Middle East, replacing it with a level of Iranian dominance not previously seen.

Challenges for the United States

By giving Iran the means to bolster its military capabilities and support for its proxies – all while allowing Tehran to approach the nuclear threshold – the JCPOA will aggravate sectarian conflict and trigger nuclear and conventional proliferation cascades in the Middle East. Our long-standing allies feel betrayed, even angered, by the deal's perceived weakening of U.S. security guarantees and reversal of decades of U.S. regional security policy. And sequestration is already diminishing the U.S. military's ability to project power in the Middle East.

Maintaining our position in the Middle East to prevent a nuclear Iran will demand increasing resources, posture and attention, far more than is necessary today. We must therefore must face the realities of the agreement with immediate action along several key lines of effort.

First, we must strengthen our fraying ties with regional allies through sustained multilateral engagement to assemble a regional coalition to hold the line against Tehran. This demands greater cooperation with U.S. partners in the region in the realms of missile defense, intelligence, air and maritime security.

Second, despite ongoing friction with both countries, we will need to undertake a significant diplomatic effort to convince Russia and China, Iran's most likely suppliers, not to sell advanced weapons to Tehran as the arms embargo and ballistic missile sanctions expire.

Third, we must develop a coherent and comprehensive strategy to deal with Iran's growing adversarial ambitions, despite having infused it with substantial resources and removing all meaningful sanctions, embargoes and restrictions during the JCPOA.

Finally, we must preserve our country's military edge against Iran with recapitalization, investment and modernization of our forces. At a minimum this would mean returning the defense budget to baseline levels requested by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates in 2012, and as recommended by the bipartisan National Defense Panel last year.³ These additional funds should be invested in rebuilding and retraining what is becoming a hollow force, as well as modernizing those capabilities most essential to deterring – and if necessary defeating – the growing threat from Iran under the JCPOA.

I thank you Mr. Chairman for my time, and I look forward to the Committee's questions.

³ United States Institute of Peace, *Ensuring a Strong U.S. Defense for the Future: The National Defense Panel Review of the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington, DC: USIP, 2014), p. xi.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Wieseltier.

STATEMENT OF MR. LEON WIESELTIER, ISAIAH BERLIN SENIOR FELLOW IN CULTURE AND POLICY, FOREIGN POLICY AND GOVERNANCE STUDIES, THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

Mr. WIESELTIER. Thank you, Chairman Royce and Ranking Member Engel. Thank you all to members of this committee.

Many critics more expert than myself have commented on the technical details of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action that the Obama administration has concluded with the Islamic Republic of Iran. In truth, it does not take an expert to understand the shortcomings of this deal if the objective of the deal is indeed to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. Since this is an objective that the administration plainly shares, its satisfaction with an arrangement that achieves this objective only temporarily, for a short period of time, while otherwise vindicating and legitimating Iran's eventual ability to weaponize its nuclear knowledge and infrastructure is difficult to understand.

From the standpoint of arms control, this deal is a respite, not a release from our well-founded anxiety about Iran's military ambitions. A respite is only a pause, and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is only a pause. It is not a reckoning with the prospect of an Iranian nuclear arsenal, it is a postponement of such a reckoning. The Iranian regime did not make a strategic decision to renounce nuclear weapons. It made a tactical decision to defer nuclear weapons so as to accomplish the strategic decision it did make, which was to escape the crushing sanctions that were the result of its nuclear adventurism.

We used a lot of leverage for too little. All the ominous options must remain on the infamous table. The accord is a change in degree, not a change in kind.

The dissatisfaction with the accord that I have just expressed concerns only the arms control aspects of the deal. But arms control never takes place in a political and strategic vacuum. It cannot be insulated from history or from morality. We recently learned this rather bitterly in Syria where the confiscation of its dictator's arsenal of chemical weapons turned out to have no impact whatever upon the conduct or the outcome of this catastrophic war and its endless atrocities. In the Syrian case, indeed, the narrow focus upon arms control was a way to evade the larger moral and strategic challenges of the horrors which this administration, its lofty rhetoric notwithstanding, has adamantly refused to face. I fear that the Iran deal is playing a similarly evasive role in the thinking of the administration.

At least our adventure in arms control in Syria did not alter our contempt for its regime, even if our contempt had no practical implications for our policy. In the case of Iran, however, the deal that we have just concluded and the spirit in which we have just concluded it strongly suggests that this exercise in arms control represents something more—a revision of our troubled relationship with Iran, an attempt to establish some sort of detente with the Islamic Republic, a lovely hope that it can be reintegrated into the community of nations.

The President has both confirmed and denied such an interpretation of the accord in keeping with his tactical needs of the moment. But it is hard not to intuit in this deal the hand that he extended to the Islamic Republic as long ago as his first inaugural address. For this reason, it is important that the deal be analyzed, not only as arms control, but also as foreign policy. And it disappoints me as foreign policy even more than it disappoints me as arms control.

It is not always the case that conflict is the result of a misunderstanding or a mistake. Sometimes conflict is a sign that differences have been properly understood. The troubled relationship of the United States with Iran should be troubled. Our previous hostility to the Islamic Republic was not based on a misreading of the Islamic Republic in its conduct within its borders or beyond its borders.

When one speaks about an unfree country, when one says the word "Iran," for example, one may be referring either to its government or to its people, but one may not be referring to both because they are not on the same side. An expression of friendship toward a dictatorship is an expression of enmity or indifference toward its people.

The President, when he speaks about Iran, likes to believe that he is speaking about its people, but in practice it is the regime to whom his hand has been warmly extended. The text of the accord states that we will submit a resolution to the Security Council "expressing a desire to build a new relationship with Iran," not a new relationship with a new Iran, but a new relationship with this Iran, with a criminal, oppressive, theocratic, belligerent, corrupt, anti-American, anti-Semitic, misogynistic, and homophobic regime that is consecrated not only to its God, but also to thwarting American allies and interests and principles everywhere and remorselessly sponsoring terrorism.

What democrat, what pluralist, what liberal, what conservative, what believer, what nonbeliever, what American would want this Iran for a friend? What constructive role can this Iran—yes, I know it is opposed to ISIS—play in the community of nations? And what constructive role can it play toward its own people? When the sanctions are lifted and Iran is economically rewarded for limited and passing concessions on its enrichment program, it will, of course, use some of the windfall to intensify its mischief abroad, about which more in a moment, and it will use the rest of its windfall to strengthen its economy. But we have no reason to think that opening up an economy has the effect of opening up a society.

There is a great deal of saddening but serious evidence that economic liberalization need not entail political liberalization. We hear a lot about a contest in Tehran between hardliners and moderates, as we have in previous periods of wishful thinking about Iran, but it is important to remember that political conflict in Iran takes place within an absolutist structure of power in which supreme authority rests with a single individual who rules by divine sanction. If the Ayatollah and the IRGC have not opened up their society, it is not because they lack the cash.

Consider also the Iranian regime's foreign policy. During the period of our negotiations with Iran, Iran was intervening furiously to inflame the Shia in Iraq, to prop up Bashar al-Assad in Syria,

to support Hezbollah in Lebanon, and to arm Hamas in Gaza. Its regional aggressions, which were directed at American interests and American allies, were uninhibited by a fear of offending the United States during a delicate negotiation about an issue of the highest importance.

We, by contrast, inhibited ourselves in all these places. We stayed our hands for many reasons, but one of them was a worry about damaging our nuclear diplomacy with Iran. The lessons of the 1970s and 1980s, when the United States had the wisdom and the courage to press the Soviet Union all at once about arms control and human rights and proxy wars, were lost on our President.

And there is also the question, or rather the cause, of Israel. The Islamic Republic's ceaseless calls for the extermination of the Jewish state must not be treated as some sort of foible or eccentricity that makes us sigh as we get on with the really important business. It should disgust us as a Nation and our disgust should take the form of policy.

Whatever one thinks of Israel's methods in intervening in the American debates, or of its actions and inactions toward the Palestinians, it would be indecent not to understand Israel's anguish at the prospect of the nuclearization of a state that arms its enemies and is eager for its destruction.

From the standpoint of foreign policy then, the nuclear accord disturbs me because it will almost certainly invigorate a contemptible and bellicose regime. And so I propose that in the aftermath of the accord we proceed to do whatever we can to weaken that regime. The adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action should be accompanied by a resumption of our hostility to the Iranian regime and its various forces.

The suggestion is not as paradoxical as it sounds. Diplomats like to say that you talk with your enemies. They are right, and we have talked with them, but they are still our enemies. We need to restore democratization to its pride of place among the priorities of our foreign policy and to oppress the theocrats in Tehran everywhere with expressions in word and deed of our implacable opposition to their war on their own people.

We need to support Iranian dissidents in any way we can, not least so that they do not feel abandoned and alone, and we must indefatigably demand the release of Moussavi and Kairoubi from the house arrest in which they have been sealed since the regime's crackdown on the democratic rebellion of 2009, on which our Government turned its back. And how, in good conscience, could we have proceeded with these negotiations while an innocent American journalist was held captive in an Iranian jail?

We need to despise the Iranian regime loudly and regularly and damage its international position as fiercely as we can for its desire to destroy Israel. We need to degrade by sanctions and other means the more dangerous elements of Iran's conventional arsenal. And we need to arm the enemies of Iran in Syria and Iraq and therefore offer a consequential obstacle to Iran's plain-as-day campaign to attain regional hegemony.

But even as I say these words, my heart sinks, because I know that that administration will not accept such activist prescriptions. And yet, it is not just the Obama administration that has preferred

a diminution of America's presence in the world when it comes to asserting American power as a force for security and justice, of recognizing the legitimacy and the necessity of American interventions against evils that offend our interests and our values—and of recognizing too that there are many courses of action that fall between Obama's lassitude and Bush's shock and awe—when it comes to articulating a right and fierce sense of America's responsibility in the world, neither Democrats, nor Republicans have exactly covered themselves in glory in recent years.

The adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action would be an appropriate occasion for opening a new discussion of the first principles of our foreign policy. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wieseltier follows:]

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House Committee on Foreign Affairs
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“Implications of a Nuclear Agreement with Iran (IV)”

Many critics more expert than myself have commented on the technical details of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action that the Obama administration has concluded with the Islamic Republic of Iran. In truth, it does not take an expert to understand the shortcomings of this deal, if the objective of the deal is to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. Since this is an objective that the administration plainly shares, its satisfaction with an arrangement that achieves this objective only temporarily, for a short period of time, while otherwise legitimating Iran’s eventual ability to weaponize its nuclear knowledge and nuclear infrastructure, is difficult to understand. From the standpoint of arms control, this deal is a respite, not a release, from our well-founded anxiety about Iran’s military ambitions. A respite is only a pause, and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is only a pause. It is not a reckoning with the prospect of an Iranian nuclear arsenal, it is a postponement of such a reckoning. If this deal is implemented, and if its verification procedures prove adequate to their extremely difficult task, we will sleep more soundly for a while – not because we will have conquered our nightmares, but because we will have deferred them. We used a lot of leverage for too little.

The dissatisfaction with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action that I have just expressed concerns only the arms control aspects of the deal. But arms control never takes place in a political and strategic vacuum. It cannot be insulated from history, certainly not if it is to succeed. We recently learned this rather bitterly in Syria, where the confiscation of its dictator’s arsenal of chemical weapons turned out to have no impact whatever upon the conduct or the outcome of this catastrophic war and its endless atrocities. In the Syrian case, indeed, the narrow focus upon arms control was a way to evade the larger moral and strategic challenges of the horrors, which the administration, its lofty rhetoric notwithstanding, has adamantly refused to face. I fear that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is playing a similar role in the thinking of the administration. The threat that Iran poses to its region, and to American interests and American allies, is not only a nuclear one, though the urgency of the nuclear threat cannot be doubted. The entirety of our relationship with Iran, and of our understanding of Iran’s role in its region, cannot be reduced to the question of the Iranian nuclear capability.

At least our adventure in arms control in Syria did not alter our contempt for its regime, even if our contempt had no practical implications for our policy. In the case of Iran, however, the deal that we have just concluded, and the spirit in which we concluded it, strongly suggests that this exercise in arms control represents something more: a revision of our troubled relationship with Iran, an attempt to establish some sort of detente with the Islamic Republic, a lovely hope that it can be reintegrated into the community of nations. The president has both confirmed and denied such an interpretation of the accord, in keeping with his tactical needs of the moment; but it is hard not to intuit in this deal the hand that he extended to the Islamic Republic as long ago as his first inaugural address. For this reason, it is important that the deal be analyzed not only as arms control but also as foreign policy. I want to say a few words about the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action as foreign policy. It disappoints me as foreign policy even more than it disappoints me as arms control.

It is not always the case that conflict is the result of a misunderstanding or a mistake. Sometimes conflict is a sign that differences have been properly understood. The troubled relationship of the United States with Iran *should* be troubled. Our previous hostility to the Islamic Republic was not based on a misreading of the Islamic Republic, in its conduct within its borders or beyond its borders. When one speaks about an unfree country, one may refer either to its government or to its people, but one may not refer to both, because they are not on the same side. An expression of friendship toward a dictatorship is an expression of enmity, or indifference, toward its people. The president, when he speaks about Iran, likes to believe that he is speaking about, and to, its people, but in practice it is the regime to whom his hand has been so patiently extended. The text of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action states that we will submit a resolution to the Security Council “expressing a desire to build a new relationship with Iran”. Not a new relationship with a new Iran, but a new relationship with *this* Iran – with a criminal, oppressive, theocratic, belligerent, anti-American, anti-Semitic, misogynistic, and homophobic regime that is also a spectacular sponsor of terrorism.

What democrat, what pluralist, what liberal, what conservative, what believer, what non-believer, would want *this* Iran for a friend? What constructive role can *this* Iran play in the community of nations? And what constructive role can it play toward its own people? When the sanctions are lifted and Iran is economically rewarded for its limited and passing concessions on its enrichment program, it will of course use some of the windfall to intensify its mischief abroad, about which more in a moment, and it will use the rest of its windfall, or so we are told, to strengthen its economy. But we have no reason to think that opening up an economy has the effect of opening up a political system. For decades now China has been showing the world the opposite -- that economic liberalization need not entail political liberalization. Who really believes that the tyrants in Tehran want a more open society, or that they regard prosperity as incompatible with repression? We hear a lot about a contest in Tehran between hardliners and moderates, as we have in previous periods of wishful thinking about Iran; but it is important to remember that political conflict in Iran takes place within an absolutist structure of power in which supreme authority rests with a single individual who rules by divine sanction. He, and the Revolutionary Guards who harshly police his closed polity, are not elected or accountable officials.

Consider also the Iranian regime’s foreign policy. During the period of our negotiations with Iran, Iran was intervening furiously to inflame the Shia in Iraq, to prop up Bashar al Assad in Syria, to support Hezbollah in Lebanon, to arm Hamas in Gaza. Its regional aggressions, which were directed at American interests and American allies, were uninhibited by a fear of offending the United States during a delicate negotiation about an issue of the highest importance. We, by contrast, inhibited ourselves in all these places. We stayed our hand for many reasons, but one of them was precisely a worry about damaging our nuclear diplomacy with Iran. The lessons of the 1970s and 1980s, when we had the wisdom and the courage to press the Soviet Union all at once about arms control and human rights and proxy wars, were lost on our president, who never feels that he has much to learn from the twentieth century. And there is also the question, or rather the cause, of Israel. The Islamic Republic’s ceaseless calls for the extermination of the Jewish state must not be treated as some sort of foible or eccentricity that makes us sigh or wink as we get on with the really important business. It should disgust us as a nation, and our disgust should take the form of policy. Whatever one thinks of Israel’s methods of intervening in the American debate, or of its actions and inactions toward the Palestinians, it would be indecent not to understand Israel’s anguish at the prospect of the nuclearization of a state that arms its enemies and is eager for its destruction.

From the standpoint of foreign policy, the nuclear accord disturbs me because it will almost certainly invigorate a contemptible and bellicose regime. And so I propose that, in the aftermath of the accord, we proceed to do what we can to weaken that regime. The adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action should be accompanied by a resumption of our hostility to the Iranian regime and its various forces. This suggestion is not as paradoxical as it seems. Diplomats like to say that you talk with your enemies. They are right. And we have talked with them. But they are still our enemies.

We need to restore democratization to its pride of place among the priorities of our foreign policy, and to oppress the theocrats in Tehran everywhere with expressions, in word and in deed, of our implacable opposition to their war on their own people. We need to support Iranian dissidents in any way we can, not least so that they do not feel abandoned and alone, and we must indefatigably demand the release of Mir-Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Kairoubi from the house arrest in which they have been sealed since the regime's crackdown on the democratic rebellion of 2009, on which our government turned its back. (And how in good conscience could we have proceeded with these negotiations while an innocent American journalist was held captive in an Iranian jail?) We need to despise the Iranian regime loudly and regularly, and damage its international position as fiercely and imaginatively as we can, for its desire to destroy Israel. We need to degrade, by sanctions and other means, the more dangerous elements of Iran's conventional arsenal. We need to arm the enemies of Iran in Syria and Iraq, and thereby offer a consequential impediment to Iran's plain-as-day campaign to attain regional hegemony.

But even as I say these words my heart sinks, because I know that this administration will not accept such activist prescriptions. Its belated and half-hearted and bumbling attempts to create what it calls a "New Syrian Force" have been risible, and also tragic. It will not even consider action against Iran's staunchest and most despicable client in the region, Bashar al-Assad and his slaughterhouse regime. But it is not just the Obama administration that has preferred a diminution of America's presence in the world. When it comes to asserting American power as a force for security and justice, of recognizing the legitimacy and the necessity of American interventions against evils that offend our interests and our values – and of recognizing, too, that there are many courses of action that fall between Obama's lassitude and Bush's shock and awe – when it comes to articulating a robust sense of America's responsibilities in the world, neither Democrats nor Republicans have covered themselves in glory in recent years. The adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action would be an appropriate occasion for opening a new discussion of the first principles of our foreign policy.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Wieseltier. I have a question for you, and it goes to this issue of looking back in time at what has worked.

You are right in terms of the difficulty in finding an effective approach to changing these types of totalitarian regimes. But in the 1980s, I was part of an exchange program that was partly in Eastern Europe, and I watched the combination of strategy, bringing down the price of oil then to \$10 a barrel, the focus on what could be done in terms of broadcasting with Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, which was much, much different. I mean it was a lesson plan in political tolerance, in political pluralism. It was taking a society that was two to one opposed to the totalitarian regime and ratcheting it up until it was three to one or four to one in opposition.

What is interesting to me is that for the last generation in Iran, people have been two to one against the theocracy. The last Gallup Poll I saw, when they asked the question, "What type of system do you want?" they said, "A Western-style democracy without a theocracy." That was the will of two-thirds of the people.

Now, when you have a theocracy, when you have a totalitarian regime, that is not enough to get you there, from our experience with Eastern Europe, but if you ratchet that up, you can get there. And I think the frustration for many of us was the failure to deploy. I mean, now it is dysfunctional, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, that is dysfunctional. Support for the opposition, nonexistent. In 2009, when the students were protesting, they did not feel that the United States was on their side in that debate, nor was the broadcasting on their side during that debate, or on social media on their side during that debate.

So the question for me would go to your observation, you know, the parallel with the Dreyfus affair, when you say you learned that there are times when an injustice to only one man deserves to bring things to a halt. In Iran today, there is an injustice, not just to those being held in Evin Prison, not just to the American you speak to, but to a whole society. How do we empower that society? I don't think it is with this agreement, because I think this agreement, in fact, empowers the IRGC and the Ayatollah. But how do we empower those people?

Mr. WIESELTIER. Let me say four quick points about that. Thank you for your remarks.

The first one is this. If it is indeed the case, as the defenders of the deal say, that it is in the rational interest of the Iranian Government to renounce nuclear weapons, and if it is indeed the case that the Iranian regime is the rational actor that those defenders describe, and if it is indeed the case that the Iranian regime would like to be reintroduced into the so-called community of nations, then we set our goals too modestly; then we set our goals too modestly. We had certain prior assumptions about Iranian flexibility, and it is not at all clear to me that they were ipso facto true. And those assumptions were based on a whole variety of things having to do with the administration's larger views about foreign policy and America's role in the world that we can talk about at another time or later.

Secondly, it is very important to remember that democratization is not an event, it is an era. It takes a very long time. It took a long time in Central and Eastern Europe under communism. It took a long time. One of the mistakes or illusions created by the Iraq war was that we can simply send in a bunch of troops, you know, fly our Air Force, and we would have a parliamentary system overnight. That is not how a society living in tyranny and repression becomes free. And when you emancipate people, when you make them free, you emancipate the actually existing people, and those are people who have not had experience of democracy. So we must keep our heads and regard this as a policy for the long term.

Thirdly, there are many instruments available to the United States in the support of democrats and dissidents everywhere. This debate, not in this room right now, but generally the Iranian nuclear debate, the administration's approach to this, has been a terribly Manichaeian picture in which it is either this particular deal or a catastrophic war. The United States is the greatest power in the world with a vast variety of instruments that it can deploy at all levels, soft power, soft versions of hard power, and even hard versions of hard power. But, you know, we are not helpless in this.

And fourth, it is very important to understand that when I say that we must support dissidents and democrats in countries, when I talk about democratization, I mean that we must support the forces where they already exist indigenously. One of the problems with our Iraq strategy was that we went in to topple a dictator who, God knows, was illegitimate and dangerous and had used chemical weapons against his people, whatever one thinks about that war. But we did not go in to support an indigenous force. In Syria, there was an indigenous force. I fear it may have been wiped out. The administration may have actually have fulfilled—its inaction may have fulfilled its worst prophecies.

In Iran, Iran is, of all of the examples, Iran is a state, a tyrannical state with a social basis for an open society if ever there was one. And there is a robust community of democrats and dissidents in Iran that the United States, I think, has not only a moral obligation to support, but also an intensely strategic obligation to support, because I can think of no greater prize, geopolitically, in the region and beyond, than a change of regime in Tehran.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you Mr. Wieseltier.

My time has expired. We are going to Mr. Eliot Engel of New York.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In my opening remarks, I mentioned that one of the things that troubled me about this agreement was the fact that the new U.N. Security Council Resolution 2231, which accompanies the JPOA, lifts the arms embargo on Iran after 5 years and ballistic missile sanctions after 8 years. So I would like to ask Admiral Fallon, what are the strategic implications of lifting these particular sanctions, and are there redundant measures in place that the United States can rely on that will prevent Iran from introducing further instability into the region?

Admiral FALLON. Mr. Engel, who knows? We could speculate all day long. There has been an awful lot of that about every aspect of this deal.

In my view, the most important thing is that Iran is very close, by pretty much consensus, to achieving a nuclear weapon. If they do that, I guess step back for a second and put this in perspective. There is no comparison in total power between Iran and the United States. They are not in the same league with us.

However, they acquire a nuclear weapon, it gives them significant leverage to blackmail us and others against doing things in this region or other places that could be destabilizing.

So it seems to me that you stack the priorities in what we would like to do here, keep the weapon out of their hands now is, in my view, far superior to the others, and that is what the objective is here. So there are all kinds of other things. If I had a clean sheet and could have all my desires, we wouldn't have included any release of ballistic missile technology or access to other weapons and a long list of things that, from our perspective, we would like to see implemented. That is not realistic, absolutely not realistic, in my opinion.

So what we are trying to do is to forestall the imminent potential of a nuclear weapon. There are only two ways to get there by my understanding of the physics. One is through uranium. We have removed, if this plan is agreed to and executed, removed that pile of uranium, enriched uranium. And the second is plutonium. And if the plant is not functioning, it is not very easy or likely they are going to build another heavy water plant any time soon.

So to me, when you look at the alternatives, give me a real one. I have heard a lot of talk. Most of it is speculation and handwringing about what could happen. Who knows what could happen? But think of a couple things, if you would please, Members. Fifteen years, that is almost a generation, and that is basically what the deal is trying to buy, pushing this off that amount of time.

The flip side, I don't know of many people that are particularly thrilled with the leadership in Tehran. I certainly have no love for them whatsoever based on observed behavior up front and personal. But 15 years from now, Khamenei is going to be, if he is alive, 91. Do you think he is going to be ruling that country? This is a country where 50 percent of the population is under the age of 30. And you can feel it from here, they want change.

So who knows what is going to happen? I think we could speculate all day long. It seems to me that we ought to be focused on the most important thing, and that is let's stop the drive to a nuclear weapon now.

Mr. ENGEL. And if anyone else cares to answer, it would seem to me, though, if we are looking to help the Iranian people have a more democratic regime, are we more likely to do it when Iran is awash in cash as this agreement will do, or are we more likely to have it if the Iranian economy, currency, and other things are struggling because they have a hold on moneys that they have?

Vice Admiral, General, Leon?

Admiral FALLON. Would you like me to take a shot at that first?

Mr. ENGEL. Sure.

Admiral FALLON. So the amount of money has also been debated, who knows, \$50 billion or \$100 billion, but in the big scheme of things, Iran seems to have done a pretty fair job of funding their

ongoing activities around the world that we find pretty nefarious. So I am not sure what this infusion of cash might result in, but I know one thing, it is almost certain, and that is if this place opens up and you get the kind of economic activity that appears to be poised to—I mean, try to get a flight into Tehran from some European capital today—this country is going to open up.

What that means for the future remains to be seen. But the idea that it is going to stay a closed society I don't think is going to happen. So this offer is an opportunity to change that.

Mr. ENGEL. Leon.

Mr. WIESELTIER. I just wanted to make a remark about this notion that one hears everywhere now that one must support the deal because there is no alternative. I never quite understood this, this point. In the first place, if a plan does not furnish a solution to the problem that it sets out to solve, then it is itself not a real alternative and not a satisfactory alternative. The debate is about whether or not it does. But the idea that because it is the only plan there is we must support it makes no sense to me if we come honestly to the conclusion that it is a bad plan.

And secondly, the idea that the argument that there is no alternative, I mean this deal is a respite of 10 years and 15 years, and we are told there is no alternative. But the same could have been said about a respite of 7 years and 12 years, or 3 years and 8 years, or 6 months and a year. The idea that there is no alternative could be used to justify any deal.

I think that the most important—the obligation we have is to judge the deal on its own merits, considering all its dimensions. And if we conclude that it is a bad deal, then I think people have to vote on their conscience about it.

Mr. ENGEL. I see my time is up, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you Mr. Engel.

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman and the ranking member.

I want to follow up on the excellent points that they had made. We have heard from some of our witnesses today that as a result of this influx of sanctions relief cash, which Mr. Engel was talking about, and strengthening the economy, that Iran will be more powerful and more militarily capable. Of course, this also means that Iran will have more money to support terror and its proxies like Hezbollah and Hamas.

If Iran right now and up to now has found the money even under these tightest of sanctions to fund its support for terror, do you believe that this influx, this new influx of funds will really go to help the domestic economy like the administration has been portraying?

And furthermore, how can an emboldened Iranian military undermine our interests in the Gulf and in the Strait of Hormuz?

We have also heard that as a result of this deal, we will have to increase cooperation with our partners in the region militarily. And how would we do that? Through increased arm sales. But this can prove to be quite problematic. Is it possible that allowing Iran's military capability to build up and by us simultaneously arming Gulf countries in the region to the teeth, could this actually lead to another war and also make it more difficult for the U.S. to be

able to respond? And how is it in our national interest in the region to have a conventional arms race and a nuclear arms race now that these countries have seen us allow Iran to keep its capability to enrich uranium? And how would this arms buildup threaten Israel's security and Israel's qualitative military edge?

And I agree with you, sir, when the administration is calling those of us who oppose this deal, which is a bipartisan majority of Congress and the American public, warmongers, yet if this deal goes through, the United States will be responsible for the mass proliferation of conventional and nuclear weapons in the region. Lots of questions.

General.

General WALD. I will answer that.

First of all, I think your points are excellent. I would like to just make a personal comment. I don't think there would be anything better for us today in this world if we could ensure Iran didn't have a nuclear weapon. I don't like that idea at all.

The concern I have about the deal is that we haven't talked about the after the deal what we are going to do. And the idea that Iran now is going to have \$100 billion, \$50 billion, I don't care, \$50 billion is a lot, a lot more than they have now, to modernize their capability—and they will—is bothersome to me as a military person.

Number two is, I think the idea that this deal is going to preclude war, I don't think the deal or not a deal is going to preclude war. I think it is a matter of how Iran acts. And they have demonstrated the desire to cause problems in the Middle East. This issue with Hezbollah that the ranking member brought up is not trivial. We have heard it is 100,000 missiles that are pointed at Israel.

Number two is, modernizing their intercontinental ballistic missile or regional missile capability is going to be hugely problematic for not just the GCC states, but the United States as a partner.

Verification. I don't know how we are going to really ensure that we have a good verification regime with the way the wording of the agreement has been stated. The fact that they are going to have 24 days to do whatever they want, the fact we can't go to their military facilities. I mean, we are going to need a strong verification regime that we do not have, and we should ensure that before we do this. And, again, you can say what you want to. Colin Powell was on TV Sunday talking about the Iraq invasion based on intelligence. We didn't have a clue what Iraq had at that point. And we were putting a lot of effort into it. And you don't think we have put a lot of effort into Iran? We don't have an idea for sure what they are doing. And they will cheat. They will cheat. There is no doubt about it.

Number three is, I think we need to continue to increase, as you pointed out, our support to our allies in the region, the GCC states, and we need to expect them to have us be participatory in a regional missile defense regime with them, not just part time, full time.

Israel. We need to beef up Israel's air defense capability. They shouldn't have four or five Iron Domes. They ought to have 30 Iron Domes. And the fact of the matter, unless Iran is deterred, unless

Iran is deterred, they are going to cause havoc in the region. They don't just want to be a nuclear power, they want to be a regional hegemon. Having them get \$100 billion to modernize their capability is a bad idea.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir. I agree.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you.

We now go to Mr. Brad Sherman of California.

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, a lot of discussion, is this a good deal, is this a bad deal? It is not our job here to grade the President of the United States or his predecessors. That is the job of talk show hosts, pundits, ultimately historians. Our job here is to guide the House of Representatives, how can the House make a positive contribution to this Nation's foreign policy under today's conditions? Not the conditions that existed a month ago or a year ago.

A month ago when we left Washington some believed that the House and the Senate might immediately affect our foreign policy under the Corker bill by passing a binding resolution of disapproval over the President's veto and preventing the President from delivering some portion of the sanctions relief promised in Vienna. Whether that was ever in the cards then, we know it is not in the cards now. The House cannot prevent the President from delivering the sanctions relief called for by the agreement. Thirty-four Senators, with seven to spare, have already announced their position.

Now, we might want to live in a fantasy world. In my fantasy world the Ayatollah is about to convert to Christianity. In the fantasy world of others, a joint resolution of disapproval is about to be passed over the President's veto by both Houses by a two-thirds majority. We are not here to live in a fantasy world.

What are the points we can all agree on? Believe it or not, there are points, and this has been a contentious debate, we can all agree on.

First, as I have pointed out, this deal is going to go into effect for the next year and a half. Whether it goes through after a veto or before a veto, the world will not remember for very long.

The second thing we can all agree on is that the nuclear safeguards in this deal are much better in this decade than they are next decade. We know what America's foreign policy will be until 2017. We do not know what is in our national interest in 2017 or 2027. As Admiral Fallon said, there is just no way to know.

So the greatest contribution this House can make is to preserve America's freedom of action dealing with circumstances we cannot predict. Even if you love this deal, the greatest proponents don't say there is a guarantee that it represents our best national interests next decade. And even if you hate this deal, you do not know what will be in our national interest next decade. What we need is freedom of action.

The threat to our freedom of action is that we are the good guys. We follow international law. If something is binding, we feel bound. The House can make one contribution, and that is to demonstrate to the American people and the world that this is not a binding agreement. Now, that has the additional advantage of being true.

It is not binding on America under the United States Constitution. And in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, this is the lowest possible executive handshake. It is not a ratified treaty, it is not an unratified treaty, it is not an executive legislative agreement.

So we have got to have the clearest possible message that this agreement is not binding on the President and not binding on Congress.

We are scheduled to deal with a resolution of disapproval, which as I pointed out will not, even if it passes, and that is problematic. In the Senate it will be vetoed. Ultimately it will be defeated, maybe only by 34 percent of one house, but it will be defeated.

There are three other approaches we could take that would make a clearer statement. We could have a concurrent resolution of disapproval that doesn't go to the President's desk, we could have a House resolution of disapproval that doesn't even go to the Senate, or we could vote on, as provided in the Corker bill, on a resolution of approval and it would be voted down. Those would be clearer statements than where we are headed now, which is ultimately a victory for the proponents of the deal.

But I don't run the House. None of us on this side of this aisle run the House. We will vote on those matters that are brought to the floor, and we have got to vote in a way that preserves freedom of action. The President has the freedom of action for the rest of his term. That is guaranteed by the votes in the Senate. Now we have to preserve freedom of action for future Presidents under future circumstances.

I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. We go now to Joe Wilson of South Carolina.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you, I want to thank the ranking member Eliot Engel, the courage that you have had over the last month as the American people find out more about this deal, they find out how dangerous it is.

The thought that there would be self-inspection, it is inconceivable, of putting the American people at risk, putting the Middle East at risk, putting our military at risk. I have four sons currently serving in the military today, so I take it personally that indeed our American military is put at risk by working with a country that provided the IEDs that killed so many of our troops.

And how we can forget 1983, the attack on the Marine barracks in Beirut, which was a direct attack by Iran killing nearly 300 marines. And people should know that that bomb explosion was the largest explosive device since Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

And then just 3 years ago this regime, a murderous regime, was attempting to blow up and kill the Ambassador from Saudi Arabia to the United States.

And so for us to be dealing with Islamofascists as if they are trustworthy is utterly inconceivable.

There has been one highlight to me, though, of this debate. Right here I had an opportunity to be here with Senator Joseph Lieberman. This is bipartisan. He expressed a heartfelt belief that the deal should be defeated and that it should be overridden. And I had the opportunity to be with him in New York.

And so as I think back to where we are. And, General Wald, a concern that I have is that with the lifting of the military sanctions, in addition to unfrozen funds, estimated, let's take the numbers, can you imagine, \$50 billion, \$100 billion, \$150 billion? That is a lot of money. What will this do for Iran's well-documented support of terrorism and destabilization across the globe? Could you please speak to these concerns and what impact this will have on the overall security chaos that is currently in the Middle East? And how does this affect American families at home?

General WALD. Thank you. I go back again, I agree with your comments. I think from my perspective as a military person who spent a lot of time in the Middle East, I was in charge at the beginning of the Afghan war that I thought was pretty successful. I have been to the Middle East 45 times. I have close friends there. I have been to Israel 40 times.

My concern about the deal is that I don't believe we have a strong verification process, and that worries me. And if we don't have a strong verification process, something that isn't necessarily even that much greater than we have today, that is not a good thing.

On the other side, for that ability, for Iran to have this lifting of the sanctions, they are going to have the money to, as you point out, modernize their military. Their military has been problematic for us anyway over the last 30 years. I mean, back in the 1990s we had a reflagging of friendly shipping through the region called Earnest Will. The United States Navy escorted every ship through the Straits of Hormuz because of the threat of the Iranian missiles, the scuds from Bandar Abbas.

They don't have the ability to actually threaten our air today because they haven't had the ability to modernize their air capability. They don't have surface-to-air missiles that are worth a darn. With this money they are going to have released, they will be able to modernize their air defense, as Admiral Bird mentioned, their anti-access, they will be able to modernize their air force, they will be able to modernize their missile capability. I will guarantee you that they are not going to sit idle in the Persian Gulf.

And the irony is we are actually putting ourselves in a more difficult position militarily by allowing themselves to modernize. We don't have a verification regime that I think would pay that off. So that is my concern.

Mr. WILSON. And I also am very, very concerned, Admiral Bird, it is my understanding that the funding for Hezbollah with the missile capability, the rocket capability to strike Israel, that it is currently being funded at \$200 million a year. So if you have \$50 billion what would be the consequence?

Admiral BIRD. Thank you, Mr. Wilson. And I agree with what General Wald said.

As Admiral Fallon and other members have pointed out, we are very unsure as to what Iran might do and what the breakout period is with respect to nuclear weapons. What we are not unsure about is what they intend to do with additional resources. They have more or less announced that they see this deal very narrowly, only dealing with their nuclear infrastructure. My sense is it is a delay of game until they ultimately get a nuclear weapon.

What it is not a delay of is the money they will fund toward Hezbollah, to their military capabilities. And given a total expense of \$16 billion for their military defense, any infusion of capital to the tune of \$50 billion or \$100 billion would be dramatic.

At the same time, the technology associated with ballistic missiles, asymmetric threats that I spoke of, is increasing somewhat organically to Iran, but certainly on the export market. So there is no doubt that Iran would get greater access to arms, ballistic missiles, submarines, attack aircraft, and the like, and funnel it to Hezbollah, as well as to their mainstream navy and Armed Forces, and be very problematic for the United States Navy, for the United States military in the Gulf.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you very much.

Chairman ROYCE. Mr. Albio Sires of New Jersey.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this hearing.

And thank you for being here.

I want all those people that are very concerned about the time, the 10 or 15 years, as I look at this region, a region with thousands of years of history, they have seen countries come and go, and I look at these hardliners in Iran, and they are saying: Well, this deal may go, but we are going to be here after this deal is done. And I can just see them positioning themselves when this is gone.

When you spoke about the Ayatollah in 10, 15 years he is going to be 90, 91 years old, well there is a succession, and all these countries have it. I look at China hardliners. There is a succession there. I look at some of these other countries, Vietnam. There is a succession there. I look at my own country where I was born, Cuba, there is a succession there. So to me 10, 15 years is the blink of an eye in a part of the world that has been around for thousands of years.

And furthermore, I really do think that all these other countries around that do not trust Iran, there is going to be a nuclear arms race, or there is going to be an effort, because they do not trust Iran that eventually they are not going to develop a bomb. And they have a history of not trusting each other.

So to me, I don't get it. And I hate the fact that when I say I have these concerns, people somehow label me as a warmonger. I mean, is most of America a warmongering country?

So do you anticipate that this is going to lead to an arms race, Mr. Wieseltier?

Mr. WIESELTIER. I think that, you know, in life time is a very strange thing. Some things feel long and some things feel short. I think that 15 years is a young person's idea of a long time. I mean, I think it is no time at all.

Moreover, I think that the burden of proof about the nature of the future character of the Iranian regime and the future behavior of the Iranian regime falls on those who believe for some reason that it is going to change and moderate itself. And I see no reason.

I think this regime is intently committed to its own preservation. It believes, as I said, that it—it actually believes that it rules by divine sanction. I believe that the Revolutionary Guards, which as someone noted are intimately involved and corrupt a great part of

the Iranian economy, is also intently committed to its own fascistic control over large sectors of Iranian society.

These are not actors that will move aside voluntarily or who will one day read Jefferson and Madison and come to their senses. That is not how it is going to happen. The only way it will happen is because Iranian society is full of many good, liberal-leaning—"liberal" in the larger term—Western-leaning, democratizing people. There is, as I said, a social basis for a new regime in Tehran. A new regime in Tehran is not something that the United States can or should bring about on its own, but it is something that if there is movement within the Iranian people, within the country of Iran, it is something that I believe American foreign policy must make it one of its priorities to support.

We have to keep our heads here. It is going to take a while. But there were people for a very long time who told us that the Soviet Union was immortal, it would not fall. And indeed it did fall, not because we brought it down, but because we helped.

Mr. SIRES. But it took a long time.

Mr. WIESELTIER. There is no way around this. There is no fast forwarding—

Mr. SIRES. No, I agree with you.

Mr. WIESELTIER [continuing]. There is no fast forwarding history. What worries me about this deal and about certain other aspect of the Obama administration is that we have gone backwards in this regard and not forward.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you.

I just want to ask, how do you justify the fact that most of the country does not agree with this deal.

Admiral FALLON. Well, the first thing is we have all kinds of attributional statements that I have heard here today and in the media that I think have little basis in fact. They are opinions. Everybody has an opinion.

If I could go back to Leon on one thing, just so you don't characterize me in the no alternative group, we have lots of alternatives. My issue is show me one that actually might achieve something that this thing looks like it has got a pretty good chance to do.

I would invite us to step back from this a little bit and look at the bigger picture. This plan is just what it is, a plan, it is long, 149 pages, whatever it is. This is not the end of the world. This is not a ship casting off and going to sea never to be seen again. This is just a step in a process. And as someone who ground his teeth and shed more than a few tears at my people who were killed as a direct result of Iranian actions in Lebanon, in Iraq, this is not some abstract nonsense.

But at some point in time, we have got to, in my view, look at the bigger picture. And the bigger picture is this region, the Middle East, is very unstable, it is very insecure. And the thing that appears to instigate the most instability is the hammering concern about Iranian nuclear weapons.

And so I invite you to look at the technical aspects of this thing. It is going to be very difficult to continue a uranium enrichment program or plutonium. How are they going to get the bomb over us? Is it going to drop out of the sky? Yeah, they could. I mean,

you could speculate all kinds of things. They could get one from Pakistan.

But I think the bigger issue here is we need to focus on the most immediate thing and recognize that it is going to be a many-step evolution. The implementation of this thing is really hard. You think this is hard? In my view, start working through the details of the implementation. And this is where the Congress, in my opinion, can really help.

So at some point in time in every dispute, it seems to me, if you are going to make progress, you have got to suck it up and say, you know, I don't like this. So the comment that Congressman Wilson made, have we forgotten the Marine barracks? I sure haven't. I was there.

Chairman ROYCE. Time has expired.

We are going to Mr. Darrell Issa of California.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General WALD. May I make a real quick comment on that last point real quick before we leave it?

I think it is ironic that Admiral Fallon, who is a friend of mine, would say that the biggest issue here is this instability in the Middle East, and the nuclear weapon is an issue but that other parts of it are even more important. And in fact this deal is going to give Iran the ability to make the Middle East a lot more unstable. And it is ironic to me that everybody that says if you don't like the deal you are a warmonger, you want to blow up Iran, I would like to avoid any conflict. But I will guarantee you, Iran with the money they are going to get from the sanctions lifting, is going to change the dynamic in the Middle East significantly.

And I will tell you another thing, and Congressman Royce know this. Robert Mugabe, we keep saying he is going to die any day. He is going to live forever. I mean, the idea you are going to wait until somebody dies to change some kind of policy is not a very good way to go.

Chairman ROYCE. We have got to go to Mr. Darrell Issa of California. I am sure we will come back to some of these arguments.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you Mr. Chairman. I have lived to ask my questions.

How many of you on the panel know or have visited the Trinity site in New Mexico? Okay. So for those who haven't visited it, that was the first successful nuclear explosion, occurred in July 1945.

How many of you know how many years after we began the Manhattan Project that bomb went off? Well, August 13, we just had the 73rd anniversary. It was less than 3 years at a time when computers mostly ticked, because relays were clicking, that it took us only 3 years to produce a nuclear weapon. That concerns me every bit as much as 37 years of ayatollah after ayatollah murdering Americans and our allies around the world and spreading terrorism.

So I want to ask just a couple of questions. And, Admiral Fallon, you generals and admirals are all friends up there, but I consider you a friend, but today I have got to ask you some tough questions. So I will put it this way, Bill: Have you read all the side agreements?

Admiral FALLON. I am not sure what you mean by side agreements.

Mr. ISSA. Well, the agreements that are not part of the deal that is being presented to Congress.

Admiral FALLON. If you are getting at the two so-called secret protocols—

Mr. ISSA. Yes, sir.

Admiral FALLON [continuing]. I guess, no I haven't read them.

Mr. ISSA. So can any of us make a fully educated understanding of this deal without knowing the deal in its entirety? I am not saying that every part of it is something that Congress has to oversee, but whether it is the IAEA or any other side agreements that are there, if we are going to approve what is effectively a treaty, why is it that anyone can reach a conclusion if we haven't seen the entire deal? And I will ask each of you that question.

Admiral FALLON. Okay. First, if I could comment, it is not a treaty—

Mr. ISSA. It is effectively a treaty.

Admiral FALLON. It is not a treaty.

Mr. ISSA. Okay. Let's put it this way. It effectively changes our role in a way in which we treat an absolute enemy of this state who still occupies our Embassy in Tehran with its foreign students and Revolutionary Guard types, they still occupy that illegally as we speak today. They are still a terrorist state. They are still a state that doesn't recognize international law. And we now are going to allow them 5 years from now to get ICBMs. So the answer to your question that you asked rhetorically is, how are they going to drop the bomb? Well, in 5 years they are going to drop the bomb with an ICBM they are fully allowed to buy.

Admiral FALLON. Well, I would be very much more concerned about the coercive effect in the next year or 2 years. But back to your original question, this Additional Protocol, I don't know what the exact language is, but I think what is noteworthy about it is that this is a voluntary expansion, as I understand it, of Iran agreeing to allow the IAEA to look at things that heretofore had not been looked at.

It might be noteworthy that this is not a typical thing, and there is a separate agreement on Parchin, that is the second part of it. And why would we be interested? Why the IAEA? You know why, because of bad behavior in the past.

Mr. ISSA. Okay. Let me switch my question—

Admiral FALLON. Nobody has agreed to it before. This is the first time—

Mr. ISSA. First of all my understanding is all they are agreeing to do is what they already agreed to do by protocol for years and refused to do. The sites they are prohibiting are sites they have prohibited in violation of agreements they already signed.

But let me just ask the fundamental question, and I was in the Sinai over the break, I saw the Boko Haram problem in Nigeria. These are areas outside of what we talk about every day, but they are part of the spreading Islamic activities on both the Sunni and Shia side that are beginning to dominate more and more of the world.

So seeing all of that, I only ask one question: Why should Congress agree to any deal that allows one of the major protagonists to have \$140 billion more that is clearly going to be used to spread their agenda, their Shia caliphate, in opposition to a Sunni caliphate, in opposition to the Western world agreement to let people live in peace, including the Christians in the Arab and Muslim world?

I will just go down the line. General Wald.

General WALD. We shouldn't. Period.

Admiral FALLON. The answer to that one is that we have had 36 years of zippo except head butting. At some point in time it is in our national interest to try to do something to stabilize this region. We don't like these guys, they don't like us, we don't trust them. What else is new? But at some point in time, we have got to actually take a step forward—

Mr. ISSA. I want to quickly just get through the other two. Where do you stand on this, Admiral?

Admiral BIRD. We should not.

Mr. WIESELTIER. My own view is that whereas one should take risks for peace, one shouldn't be played for a fool. And I worry that we are being played for fools here because the windfall of this money. I mean, these are matters of history. We know what the Iranian regime believes in. We know how it has behaved beyond its borders. I see absolutely no reason to believe that this windfall will not impact its adventures beyond its borders.

Mr. ISSA. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Issa.

So we go now to Mr. Ted Deutch of Florida.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral Fallon, I just wanted to follow up on that last exchange. When you said that at some point we have to try to do something to stabilize the region, it seems to me there is just not a response to the very real concern that I think critics and supporters of the deal acknowledge, that money flowing to this regime, some portion of it is going to go to Hezbollah and Hamas and other terrorist groups. They will use that to further destabilize the regime.

And so we can have a debate about what happens at the end of this deal, and I agree with Mr. Wieseltier that this is really just a pause, but that is a separate issue. In the short term, the money, the lifting of the arms embargo, the ability to conduct ballistic missile research, all of that will make the region I think less secure. It will destabilize the region, number one.

And number two, from an arms control perspective, for all of us who really are concerned about nuclear proliferation, I fail to understand how once this deal goes forward, how it is that if the Saudis or Turkey or Egypt come to us, come to the United States and say, "You know what, we just want that, we will take the Iran deal, we will take all of the limitations, the limits on centrifuges, the duration, but we will take the deal that at the end of 10 years or 15 years gives us the ability to have an unlimited nuclear capacity," how do we possibly say no to that? I don't understand how we could possibly reject that once this deal is in place.

Admiral FALLON. Well, I am not sure to your last point that anybody is lining up to—

Mr. DEUTCH. It is not whether they are, it is whether they could. That is always the debate about nuclear proliferation.

Admiral FALLON. You can speculate all day long about what could. Many things could. But a couple of realities here. No sanction relief at all until Iran demonstrates that the uranium and plutonium are done.

Mr. DEUTCH. Admiral Fallon, I am sorry, I only have a couple of minutes. And I am going to have to go, I want to change in a second. But I understand what has to be done. I am very familiar with the deal. But the question is, when they satisfy their requirements to get access to billions of dollars, that will destabilize the region.

Admiral FALLON. In the near term, who knows what they are going to do with the money. It wouldn't surprise me at all. But, you know, one of the ironic things about this—

Mr. DEUTCH. Okay. That is all I wanted—no, no, that is all I wanted to confirm.

Admiral FALLON. Yeah, but, you know, taking this thing in isolation—

Mr. DEUTCH. No, no, Admiral Fallon, Admiral Fallon, I only have limited time.

I was just hoping someone would finally acknowledge that. We can have a debate about this deal and long term where it goes. In the short term there will be more ability, a greater ability for Iran to destabilize, and there will be more violence. That should be our concern. We at least have to acknowledge it. I appreciate it.

Mr. Wieseltier, I want to get back to your point about the regime, the anti-American, anti-Semitic, homophobic, misogynistic. What should be our role—

Mr. WIESELTIER. Speaking politely.

Mr. DEUTCH. I understand, and that was only a short, brief listing of what you included. What should our foreign policy look like in a way to make it clear that a regime which makes being gay punishable by death, for example, a regime that—well, you have listed them all—I mean, how do we make clear, especially at this moment as this deal is going forward, that we are not just hoping that the regime changes but that we very clearly stand on the side of the Iranian people and not this difficult and horrible regime?

Mr. WIESELTIER. You asked the important question. We don't make it clear, of course, by immediately rushing to war with this regime. We begin to make it clear by including the critique of this regime and the principles upon which that critique would be based, meaning the full-throated defense of freedom, no matter how many times George W. Bush used that word, the full-throated defense of freedom, the notion that the United States will be on the side of people seeking freedom, the notion that there is a natural, democratic relationship between—a natural alliance, a natural relationship between democrats the world over and between democratic states the world over.

We have in the last 6 years gone mute on these questions as a country. We have gone mute. We do not talk about freedom, we do not stand up to these dictators. We try to find realist—we specialize, we have a new specialty, not in inaction, but in inconsequential action. This is, I think, Obama's innovation in our for-

eign policy. And I think that verbally and at all levels of the instruments that I describe, the United States has to make it clear that it is the country to which all such people should look to as a source for hope and help, as a source for hope and help.

We can argue about what kind of help. Those are interesting debates. The idea that it is not either in our interest or a fulfillment of our values to offer such societies no help and no hope, that seems to me completely untrue, completely untrue. Yeah. That seems to me completely untrue.

I just wanted to add one thing to what my friend, Mr. Deutch, said to your earlier point, which is when we talk about the release of the sanction money and what I agree is the inevitable mischief that will ensue as a result of it, we could think of it a little differently. I would even be willing to consider the instability that came from the release of the sanction money if the stability that the nuclear deal brought about nuclear weapons would be real, would be long lasting, would be permanent. That would be an interesting discussion. And that would be a miserably difficult trade-off, but it would be a tradeoff that it might be worth talking about, because the idea of an Iran that agreed to renounce nuclear weapons would be a strategic victory of the highest order.

But in an agreement in which the Iranians do not agree to go that far, so that the nuclear instability remains, it is deferred, it is postponed, it is brought down, it is delayed, but remains historically, then the question of the impact of the released sanction money becomes even more urgent.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN [presiding]. Thank you very much, Mr. Deutch.

We go to Mr. Weber of Texas.

Mr. WEBER. Thank you.

This is for the panel. Basically the deal that is before us, when it was negotiated by Secretary Kerry and others, would it have been reasonable—and hopefully this is a yes-or-no questions for the four of you—would it have been, in your estimation, reasonable for the world’s leading exporter of terror, has four of our hostages, in your opinion, gentlemen, would it have been reasonable to say, “If you are going to be serious about getting back into the world community, world neighborhood,” would it have been reasonable, General Wald, to say, “The first thing you do as an act of good faith is give us our four hostages?” Would that have been reasonable?

General WALD. My job is to do military advice.

Mr. WEBER. Okay. Well, you have an opinion on it? If you don’t, that is fine.

General WALD. I will give you an answer, from a U.S. citizen: Absolutely.

Mr. WEBER. Okay.

General WALD. I mean, we are supposed to protect our country and that should be reasonable.

If I could just say one last thing on that real quick, and I agree with you, but when we started the negotiations we had objectives, I believe. And I think negotiation means compromise, means discuss. I get that. But you have to have certain core principles you ought to stick with. And I think we compromised that on the way down the path.

Mr. WEBER. And that is where I am going.

Admiral FALLON, reasonable or not reasonable to say, "As an act of good faith, give us our hostages"?

Admiral FALLON. Probably not reasonable.

Mr. WEBER. Probably not reasonable.

Admiral FALLON. Do you know why?

Mr. WEBER. No.

Admiral FALLON. Because the priority is nuclear weapons.

Mr. WEBER. I am not really interested. I don't mean to sound disrespectful, I am running out of time.

Admiral BIRD. Very reasonable.

Mr. WEBER. I think so.

Mr. Wieselstier.

Mr. WIESELSTIER. I think that by not releasing the hostages as was their foreign policy in the region, they were defying us and they were making it perfectly clear that the nuclear agreement would not affect the rest of the—

Mr. WEBER. So we are debating with an enemy who has clearly demonstrated, somebody said over 36 years, by sticking their finger in our eye and killing Americans, that they don't care about us. They believe in a culture of death, whereas we believe in a culture of life. Okay.

So when the administration goes in there and says they want the best deal, is it reasonable for them to say, "We will walk away from a bad deal"? Was that reasonable? I think it is reasonable, wouldn't we all agree, if it was a bad deal they would walk away from it?

We are fixing to give them back their money. The administration did not extract promises for them to, A, stop exporting terrorism, stop the rhetoric on the United States and Israel must be destroyed, to stop supplying weapons over to Assad in Syria, exporting terrorism if you want to get technical.

So I don't think that is was reasonable when John Kerry said—and I have a letter from him here dated September the 2nd, he talks about need to vote for this bill and all these good things are going to happen. And then he goes into on page 2 of this bill, and he basically defines, well, we are going to plus up Israel's military capability, we are going to plus up people in the region, their military capability.

Now, can you say arms race? Can you say that the destabilizing of that region is not going to get better, it is going to get worse? And to my friend Ted Deutch's comments earlier about if these other countries come to us and say, "We want nuclear power," how do we tell them that we have an administration who will not give energy companies over here a permit to build a nuclear power plant, but they will take American tax dollars and build one for our enemies?

Gentlemen, I want to submit to you that is not reasonable. John Kerry and my company, in my estimation, didn't use reason to get to this position.

And so I understand the futility of thinking that somehow I can—and those that support this deal, I am sorry if this sounds crass, if they have bought into that hook, line, and sinker—we can't reason somebody out of a position that they didn't use reason to get into.

Yes or no, General Wald, bad deal?

General WALD. Again, I am not a politician. I will just say from a military perspective this is not putting us in a better position.

Mr. WEBER. I am going to get to a point.

Admiral Fallon, I take it you think it is yes because you say we have got to do something after 36 years.

Admiral FALLON. I said given the alternative.

Mr. WEBER. War is not the only alternative. We should have negotiated from power and strength.

Vice Admiral Bird?

Admiral BIRD. Yes, sir, I think it is a bad deal.

Mr. WIESELTIER. Bad deal.

Mr. WEBER. Bad deal.

I don't buy the idea that somehow war is the only other alternative. If you go back to World War II, Hitler violated the Treaty of Versailles in 1935 and began to plus up his military. The British signed a pact with him allowing him to do that, to rebuild the Luftwaffe, to rebuild their navy, and as a result the British had to withdraw from the Baltic area. We are in the process of doing the exact same thing with the Iranian regime.

Madam Chair, I yield back.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, sir.

Dr. Bera.

Mr. BERA. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

As the chairman stated, this is our 30th hearing on this topic. I have had multiple individual meetings with passionate supporters of the deal and folks that are very concerned with the deal. And individuals have asked me, "How come you haven't taken a position?" Because this is a very important negotiation and it is a very important crossroads, and there are both merits to this deal and there are shortcomings to the deal.

And it is incredibly important, I think, as Admiral Fallon has pointed out. We do have to think about how we move forward, though, in terms of a very unstable region.

The goal of this negotiation was to reduce or eliminate Iran's nuclear threat. As Secretary Kerry has pointed out, as multiple folks have pointed out both in classified and unclassified settings, at a minimum it does reduce the threat for 15 years. And in this hearing it has been pointed out Iran is fairly close to being a threshold state at this juncture, if they are not already a threshold state. So I think that is a goal that has been achieved.

Goal number two, is there enough in this verification regime? I think, as Secretary Moniz spoke personally to me as well as in this committee, has indicated he is satisfied on the nuclear issue that there is enough in the verification regime that if Iran does cheat on the nuclear issue that they will get caught.

Goal number three and a concern of mine was, is there immediate sanctions relief? Is there a signing bonus? Again, as Secretary Lew has pointed out both in this committee and privately, there is no immediate sanctions relief. There is no trust in this. There has to be verification. Iran has to meet its deal, its portion of the deal, before there is any sanction relief.

So those are some of the positives that are in here.

Now the concerns. Concern number one, I don't trust Iran. I expect that the Iranians will cheat, and they will likely cheat on the margins to test our resolve. And at this juncture I think it is incredibly important that both the United States and our allies have that resolve that when they do cheat we immediately hit them and send them a strong message. It may not be full sanctions being implemented, but that we send a message that this is not an acceptable behavior.

As Ranking Member Engel pointed out in his testimony, at this juncture let's be pragmatic. The deal is likely to move forward. So let's make sure we as a body do what we have to do to make sure that we take the deal that is present and we send a strong message.

Concern number two, Iran has not been a responsible nation. In fact, I think everyone on the panel, as well as all the members of this committee, understand that Iran has been an actor to destabilize the region. That is not what this deal was about in terms of sanctions against Hezbollah and others. I think most of us expect, as Iran's economy improves, they likely will continue to fund these terrorist organizations and maybe increase funding.

We as Congress, as well as the administration, have to do everything in our power to reassure our allies, particularly Israel, to make sure that they have what they need to counteract what potentially is increased destabilization, increased funding to Hezbollah, et cetera.

Concern number three is also making sure that we take advantage of these 15 years. Even folks that are against the deal understand that it does reduce the nuclear threat. We must put ourselves in a better position 15 years from now should Iran pursue nuclear ambitions that we, if we have to intervene militarily, if we have to intervene in other ways, that we are in a better position to do so.

Admiral Fallon, I will ask a quick question because I am running out of time. I think we all agree that Iran has destabilized the region. What would you suggest that we do, both as Congress as well as the administration, to work with our allies to mitigate potentially what is increased destabilization?

Admiral FALLON. Well, one of the things that we have tried as a Nation, and certainly our diplomats and commanders in this region, that I think would be most helpful would be to try to convince our allies in the area to work together, to cooperate with one another, to have capability that could be united in the event that Iran backtracks on these things.

It has been a very, very difficult challenge. They each have their own interests, their priorities, and so forth, and it has kind of fragmented their reactions to Iran to date. They wring their hands, want help, but they have to help themselves.

One of the key points here for me in my experience is the idea that we are going to go over there and straighten this all out, we are going to fix all this and they are going to, these countries, is nonsense. They are going to have to fix it. We just have to help—

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Admiral Fallon.

Thank you, Dr. Bera.

Mr. Brooks of Alabama.

Mr. BROOKS. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I have some questions I am going to ask each of you to, and I would appreciate if you would answer them with either a “yes” or a “no” or an “I don’t know.” They are very simple questions.

The first one deals with have you read the bill. I am talking about House Resolution 1191, Public Law 114–17, commonly known as the Corker Cardin bill, but more formally known as the “Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015.” And by way of reference, that is the bill that governs how Congress is considering this Iran nuclear agreement.

General Wald, have you read it?

General WALD. I haven’t read the whole thing.

Mr. BROOKS. Admiral Fallon, have you read it?

Admiral FALLON. Not the whole thing.

Mr. BROOKS. Vice Admiral Bird, have you read it?

Admiral BIRD. No, sir.

Mr. BROOKS. Mr. Wieseltier, you have read it?

Mr. WIESELTIER. Yes, I have read it.

Mr. BROOKS. Thank you.

Now, for those of you who have not read it, and also to refresh your recollection for those who have, I am looking at paragraph (a)(1), which is a requirement imposed on the President of the United States by this agreement that the President signed: “Not later than 5 calendar days after reaching an agreement with Iran relating to the nuclear program of Iran, the President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership the agreement, as defined in subsection (h)(1), including all related materials and annexes.” And the agreement is, of course, the Iran nuclear agreement.

So we have to go to another provision in the bill to find out what the heck the word “agreement” means. And so I turn to paragraph (h)(1), quote:

“The term ‘agreement’ means an agreement related to the nuclear program of Iran that includes the United States, commits the United States to take action, or pursuant to which the United States commits or otherwise agrees to take action, regardless of the form it takes, including any joint comprehensive plan of action entered into or made between Iran and any other parties, and any additional materials related thereto, including annexes, appendices, codicils, side agreements, implementing materials, documents, and guidance, technical or other understandings.”

So my question to each of you is, pursuant to this requirement, has the President properly submitted to the United States Congress all side agreements related to the Iran nuclear agreement?

General Wald, as you understand the situation, has the President done that.

General WALD. I have no idea.

Mr. BROOKS. Admiral Fallon, yes, no, or I don’t know?

Admiral FALLON. I believe that agreements that the U.S. has negotiated with Iran—

Mr. BROOKS. That is not what this says. It says side agreements with Iran and third parties.

Admiral FALLON. That we have been a part of.

Mr. BROOKS. Have all of those been produced?

Admiral FALLON. That we, the U.S., has been a part of.

Mr. BROOKS. No. That is not the requirement under the statute. All right.

Vice Admiral Bird, do you know if all these side agreements with Iran and third parties have been provided to the United States Congress?

Admiral BIRD. I read Mr. Pompeo's editorial on the same thing. I do not know. I am not a lawyer. But I do think the Congress should review them all.

Mr. BROOKS. Mr. Wieseltier.

Mr. WIESELTIER. I don't know, but I have a hunch about what the answer is.

Mr. BROOKS. Well, with respect to the International Atomic Energy Agency's secret agreement with Iran, I will represent to you that that has not been presented to me as a Member of the United States Congress, and in talking to my colleagues, it has also not been presented to them by the Obama administration, which means in turn that the Obama administration has failed to comply with the very law that it asked the United States Congress to sign.

So my next question to you, if you know—well, for time brevity I see that I have only got a little bit, over a minute left, I will answer this question myself.

The question is, what is the effect of Barack Obama's failure to comply with the statute that he signed that governs our ability to review and/or approve this agreement?

And if you go to paragraph (b)(3) of the agreement—excuse me, of the law—it says:

“Notwithstanding any other provision of law . . . prior to and during the period for transmission of an agreement in subsection (a)(1) and during the period for congressional review provided in paragraph (a) . . . the President may not waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of statutory sanctions with respect to Iran under any provision of law.”

And so unless you have something to the contrary, and I would welcome any illumination that you may have, it seems to me until such time as the President complies with the statute and provides the United States Congress all side agreements, he has no right to relieve any sanctions, and if he does so he is in violation of the law, which might be an impeachable offense. Do you have any comments in that regard?

General WALD. No.

Mr. BROOKS. Admiral Fallon.

Admiral FALLON. Wouldn't touch it.

Mr. BROOKS. Vice Admiral Bird.

Admiral BIRD. No, sir.

Mr. BROOKS. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE [presiding]. All right. Lois Frankel of Florida.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for this robust debate.

I have heard the number 15 a number of times. I have another way of looking at it. Fifteen seconds. That is how long a child who lives near the Gaza Strip in Israel has to take cover when a missile is shot into their city, 15 seconds. There have been over 10,000 rockets fired by Hamas, with the support of Iran, into Israel. There are 100,000 missiles that Hezbollah has aimed at Israel with the help of Iran.

We have been talking a lot about Israel. What about the children in Syria? They don't even have a bomb shelter to run into. Barrel bombs with chlorine, with shrapnel dropped. We saw videos of children suffering from nerve gas poisoning right here in this meeting. All at the hands of Assad, who is being propped up by Iran.

Listen, I applaud the President for trying a diplomatic settlement. I believe in a diplomatic settlement. I believe Iran should not have a nuclear weapon. But in my mind, the tradeoff is too great right now, to give billions of dollars to Iran, and not enough of a concession. So that is my take on it.

But I do have a question, and I think this would help the public a lot in the discussion, which is if you could explain the relationship between Iran and Syria and Israel, and why it is you believe that Iran continues to prop up all this horrific terrorist activity.

General WALD. Yeah, I mean, I think what you brought up is really a good point that probably none of us really understand for sure. But I think the point that I take from that is that we want to treat Iran like we think. They don't think like us. And I think most people think: Well, they have to, they are human beings. They have a different culture, they have a different way of looking at things, they have different standards, they have different goals. And I think one of the biggest problems we have is we really don't understand the Iranians. I think we—

Ms. FRANKEL. Excuse me, though, but don't they have a regional mission?

General WALD. The Iranians?

Ms. FRANKEL. Yes. They have a—

General WALD. They want to be a regional hegemon, there is no doubt about it. But the motivation part is difficult. And I think one of the dangers we have when we go into negotiations sometimes is this is the way I wish it would, let's act that way. It really isn't. And I think the Iranians basically have a very limited reality from the standpoint of ethical truthfulness.

Admiral FALLON. Opinion?

Ms. FRANKEL. Yes.

Admiral FALLON. I had a lot of those today. I will give you one more. Very pragmatic. Their allies and surrogates and henchmen are Hezbollah in Lebanon. If Syria goes the other way, they are cut off from them. Very difficult to get the kind of support into Lebanon given the Israeli control of the coast and the other border. So very pragmatically, if they lose Syria, their best buds over there and proxies now, they are in deep trouble.

Admiral BIRD. I agree with General Wald and Admiral Fallon, I think Iran has regional hegemony, a Shia Crescent, if you will. They have a strategy that has no rules, no principles, no morals whatsoever. And their strategy, if you look at the last 15 years to

date, has been brilliant, and I believe with this agreement it is furthered.

Mr. WIESELTIER. I agree with what my colleagues have said and would add only that one of the reasons that some of us have been futilely agitating for the Obama administration to intervene in Syria 3 and 4 years ago was because we regarded the fall of the Assad regime as probably the greatest strategic wound we could inflict upon the regime in Tehran. Assad is their most important regional client, and as things now stand, there is a belt, an access, a corridor, whatever, of Iranian control, of Iranian influence from Tehran all the way to the Mediterranean, and that is one of the most important geopolitical facts about the region.

Ms. FRANKEL. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman ROYCE. Thank you, Ms. Frankel.

We go now to Scott Perry of Pennsylvania.

Mr. PERRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, would any of you disagree that Iran, over the last, say, 36 years regarding agreements with the West, nuclear or otherwise, including on this very current day, have been known and documented, acknowledged cheaters? Would anybody disagree with that? I am just trying for expediency sake. Okay.

So, Admiral Fallon, you as well or not?

Admiral FALLON. Yeah, I said that. I don't trust these guys. What else is new?

Mr. PERRY. Okay. All right. Fair enough.

And so in particular, because you are one member of the panel that has found some accord with this agreement or at least a way to agree with it or think it is better than it isn't, I want to have a conversation with you. But I don't want to have this dialectic conversation because we have a difference of opinion. But for your part in it, I wonder what facts—and I pause there purposely—what facts lead you to believe, after 36 years—and thank you very much for your service, sir, you were right there, so you have an additional credibility that very few people have—but what facts lead you to your conclusion? Not suppositions of the future, not this Ayatollah will be dead, not—

Admiral FALLON. The conclusion?

Mr. PERRY. Yes.

Admiral FALLON. What conclusion?

Mr. PERRY. The facts that you concluded that this is a good deal because of what might happen in the future in 15 years, that the young population might change and overthrow its government, the Ayatollah will be dead, and there won't be a replacement. What facts?

Admiral FALLON. So I wouldn't characterize this as a good deal, but I would characterize it as the best alternative we have to stop them from a nuclear weapon. And the reason I think that this has a chance to succeed is because the detailed implementation, if they are carried out, of the stopping the two nuclear pipelines of uranium and plutonium give us the best chance of achieving what we really want—

Mr. PERRY. Arguably—

Admiral FALLON [continuing]. To stop the weaponing.

Mr. PERRY. The timeline is 15 years maximum, right? Would you acknowledge that?

Admiral FALLON. No.

Mr. PERRY. If I agree with you on everything—by the way, and I don't, because I think they are going to continue to cheat, but that is my supposition.

Admiral FALLON. So do I.

Mr. PERRY. But regardless, in 15 years it is open, the store is open, do whatever you want.

Admiral FALLON. I don't think so. I don't think it is——

Mr. PERRY. Based on what?

Admiral FALLON. Based on what? Based on the fact that if, in fact, this thing is implemented, as it has been laid out in its various steps, they will have had 15 years with a minimum amount of fissionable material, who knows what other things are going to happen? But the key thing is——

Mr. PERRY. But in 15 years——

Admiral FALLON. If I could, though——

Mr. PERRY. With all due respect——

Admiral FALLON [continuing]. You make this assumption that in 15 years everything is going to be exactly the same as it is today. I don't believe that for a second.

Mr. PERRY. No, I don't think it is going to be exactly the same, not the least of which are their increased military capability over that period of time and our diminished ability to reach out and touch them tactically because of their increased military prowess.

But that having been said, I just have to disagree with you, and it seems to me that the facts don't comport with reality here. And so to get some of the other folks involved—before I do that, though, a better deal. Let me ask you this. Wouldn't a better deal include action, reaction. So they act, we have problems with them, not only the United States, but the Western civilized world has a problem with them, so they act in accordance with some of the demands. In other words, stop some of the terrorist things do this and do that. And then once you act, then we will react. But that is not what this deal is. Would not that, just as a simple structure, be a better deal?

Admiral FALLON. But that is not part of the deal. It might well be, but that is not part of the deal.

Mr. PERRY. But you said there is no better deal, but you just acknowledged just now that that could be a better deal if we structured it that way.

Admiral FALLON. That is a fiction. That is a wish.

Mr. PERRY. It is a fiction because we haven't made it a reality. We have the possibility and the ability to make all that a reality.

Admiral FALLON. I disagree.

Mr. PERRY. All right.

Let me ask you this. And Mr.—is it Wieseltier. How you pronounce your name?

Mr. WIESELTIER. Wieseltier, yeah.

Mr. PERRY. I am fascinated to get your answer on this, too. We have very different cultures, ideologies, theologies, et cetera. Is there a possibility that we will never, ever get along with Iran or this—the people that think like the people that are in charge in

Iran? And if that is true, at what point down the line of this agreement, at what point will that be obvious to you and you will say we have to scuttle where we are and make the best of what we can and that we are never going to agree with these people? Is there some point, sir, Admiral?

And if not, if you need to think about it, Mr. Wieseltier, is there some point.

Mr. WIESELTIER. Well, look, I think I would be a little bit careful about painting cultural differences this grossly. We are human beings. They are human beings. We can understand each other. I mean, we can agree, we can disagree, they have their reasons, we have our reasons. But I am not worried that they are so far gone into some alien culture, or what someone said earlier, some culture of death. I mean, I don't know what these things mean, and they veer toward kind of ugly prejudice, which I know you don't intend, but one has to be careful.

I think that what we already understand about the world view of this regime and about its history suffices to establish that it is our enemy, and it is the enemy of democracy, and it is the enemy of many states who are our allies, and it is the enemy of things that we cherish. I think it couldn't be clearer.

General WALD. Yeah, I would like to comment on that, too, if I might.

Chairman ROYCE. General Wald, I am sorry, we are out of time.

We are going to go to Gerry Connolly of Virginia.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And picking up on your last point, Mr. Wieseltier. Is it unusual for the United States to negotiate with its adversaries?

Mr. WIESELTIER. Depends when and about what.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Did we do it with the Soviet Union?

Mr. WIESELTIER. About certain things we certainly did.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Was the Soviet Union dedicated to our destruction?

Mr. WIESELTIER. In some ways ideologically it was, and it had the ability to destroy us.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Did it also engage in warfare and terrorism and insurgency at our expense?

Mr. WIESELTIER. It did.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Yeah. Thank you.

Mr. WIESELTIER. Well, hold up. May I say something about it?

Mr. CONNOLLY. Yes, sir.

Mr. WIESELTIER. The difference between our approach to Iran in our negotiations and the approach toward the Soviet Union was this. This is now the 40th anniversary of the Helsinki Watch Accord. When it was proposed that the United States begin to press the Soviet Union on human rights during a period of intense arms control negotiations, there were people in favor of detente, a statesman rail, political people who said: You are out of your mind, the stakes are too high, the nuclear negotiations will collapse, we cannot go after them on moral questions, on human rights questions, on democracy. Those people lost.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Yeah.

Mr. WIESELTIER. And we in fact did negotiate with them on both tracks, and the duality of those tracks is what is missing here—

Mr. CONNOLLY. Right.

Mr. WIESELTIER [continuing]. And what determined some of the outcomes there—

Mr. CONNOLLY. But there is also one big difference. We hadn't had a cone of silence for 30 years. This is our first real substantive engagement with this country in a long time. And to me it is remarkable that actually we were able to negotiate an agreement like this, including with two would-be adversaries in various guises, Russia and China.

Admiral FALLON, how close do you think, is it your assessment, Iran is to actually crossing that threshold as a nuclear state right now? Months? Years?

Admiral FALLON. I think it is close, certainly inside of years, but I am also mindful of the couple of decades worth of they are going to have it next year or 2 years, I have heard that from—

Mr. CONNOLLY. Does the agreement in front of us roll back—

Admiral FALLON. Here is the key thing.

Mr. CONNOLLY. We are going to have to watch our time, Admiral Fallon. I am not trying to interrupt you or be rude, but this chairman is going to put that gavel down in 2 minutes and 42 seconds. So I want to pursue a line of questioning with you, if you don't mind.

Admiral FALLON. Okay.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Does this agreement roll back existing nuclear capabilities?

Admiral FALLON. It takes off the table the fundamental nuclear capability that Iran has been working hard to—

Mr. CONNOLLY. Does it reduce enriched material?

Admiral FALLON. Of course.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Does it reduce the level of enrichment of what is left behind?

Admiral FALLON. The amount left behind is a fraction of what is available to them.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And it reduces it to 3.67 percent. Is that not correct?

Admiral FALLON. Correct.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Does it mothball a significant number of existing centrifuges?

Admiral FALLON. Yes.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Does it change the equation at the plutonium production facility?

Admiral FALLON. Stops it.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Stops it. Does it make it harder or easier for Iran to develop a nuclear weapon?

Admiral FALLON. At least it appears to be would be much more difficult.

Mr. CONNOLLY. And I heard the timetable some people want you to believe, want us all to believe, that somehow magically this all ends in 15 years and now we have created a guarantee for a nuclear Iran. Is that your view?

Admiral FALLON. No, because there are parts of this arrangement that actually go well beyond that, in perpetuity in some cases. Again, do we trust them? No. We are going to have to try—

Mr. CONNOLLY. We didn't trust the Soviets. Ronald Reagan said, "doveryai, no proveryai," trust, but verify. So we have no reason to trust them, that is why we create a, hopefully, verifiable and inspection-laden regime, right?

Admiral FALLON. Or as my good friend and colleague Mike Mullen just said a couple of days ago, I read, distrust.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Distrust.

Real quickly. The so-called—the military referred to kinetic option. When you look at, you know, other alternatives, a number of military have testified that the only real viable alternative—the notion that we are going to go back to the negotiating table and everyone is going to come back as one happy family after we renounce our own agreement and then ask them to start all over again, to me is delusional and very specious logic, if there is any logic at all. Would you agree with that?

Admiral FALLON. I think the reality here is that the other countries have already decided. And, again, it is pretty busy commercial traffic into Tehran now. So sanctions are gone.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Forgive me for not giving you more time and others on the panel, but real quickly, would you describe the kinetic option? What is going to be entailed? If this fails, if we walk away from this successfully and the negotiating partners collapse, the military option, the kinetic option, what does it entail and what are the consequences, you as a former member of our military, fear?

Admiral FALLON. Probably a little more pointed than that, actually had the responsibility for executing such a thing if it were ever called upon. So you can do all kinds of things militarily. We have overwhelming comparative power to these guys. We could hurt them badly, in my opinion. The idea that this would somehow, by dropping a number of bombs, remove the threat, I believe is total nonsense.

We could remove it, and that would probably involve a very, very significant land force to go do and basically take care of things. But to do this all just with a bunch of bombs, I don't think so.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman ROYCE. We go now to Ted Poe of Texas.

Mr. POE. The Ayatollah today tweeted: "Israel will not see the next 25 years. There will be nothing as a Zionist regime by the next 25 years." The Ayatollah also has recently said more than once: "Death to America." Seems to me that is their foreign policy.

Is there any reason, General, that we should not believe the Ayatollah when he says, "Death to America, down with Israel in 25 years," or is that just a bunch of rhetoric?

General WALD. You know, I have thought about this a lot, and I have heard this from people a lot, and they say: "That just is rhetoric. You just don't know."

Mr. POE. Well, what do you think?

General WALD. I don't know. Frankly, my issue is if I was 100 percent sure they were just saying that, it didn't matter, then I wouldn't care. I think there is a possibility.

First of all, as was pointed out, they have no compulsion about killing our troops, our U.S. troops with some of the most horrendous weapons I have ever seen, these VIDs they have helped build,

and are right behind that every time. The Quds Force commander the other day said the same thing you just mentioned.

Mr. POE. So why this nuclear—

General WALD. They say that every day. If I am in Israel—

Mr. POE. I am sorry, general, I am reclaiming my time. I know I was just a sergeant in the Air Force, but I am reclaiming my time.

General WALD. No, anyway, it doesn't seem logical to us, but I don't think we understand them. I would say you got to take it for what it is worth.

Mr. POE. All right.

Admiral, I will ask the Navy a question.

Admiral FALLON. What is that? You passed on the Navy?

Mr. POE. No, I didn't say I would pass on the Navy.

Let me move on and ask something else. Admiral Bird, let me ask you a couple of questions about the policy of Iran. We know, the world knows this deal is going on, and we have Iran making all of these statements. Assume everything in the deal takes place. Is the world going to be safer or less safe at the end of the day from a nuclear Iran?

Admiral BIRD. Well, as I have testified, I think, arguably, in the short term, as Admiral Fallon would say, from a nuclear perspective we might be safer. In terms of the conventional and all the things I mentioned from asymmetric, less safe in the region, more destabilized.

In the long term, we will have a nuclear Iran, which we have sanctioned, and we will be much less safe.

Mr. POE. Do you think when the Ayatollah says, "Death to America," he is serious or is that just some rhetoric?

Admiral BIRD. I think he is serious on his tweeting and things he says, and if you will pardon my cynicism, he never agreed to not be that way in the deal. He just agreed to comply with this limitation for 15 years on nuclear weapons.

Mr. POE. The inspection, if I understand this agreement, the inspection is going to be done by the Iranians. Is that right, Admiral Bird?

Admiral BIRD. Sir, I don't know. I know there is speculation. I think this goes to Mr. Issa's questions about the secret agreement or at least not revealed to the Congress of the IAEA in Iran and what they have a deal to in terms of the Additional Protocol.

Mr. POE. Don't you think Congress ought to see this side agreement, however many they are, whatever it is, before we even decide whether or not it is good for the United States?

Admiral BIRD. I absolutely do.

Mr. POE. I think it is foolhardy that we would make a vote on such an important national security issue if we don't see the side deals. It seems to me, though, the Iranians are going to be the ones that investigate the Iranians to see if the Iranians are cheating or not. I used to be a judge. That is like putting 12 burglars on a jury for trying a burglar. I have got problems with the Iranians investigating the Iranians about nuclear weapon development.

Does anyone see in this agreement that scenario or is it some independent outside group? Admiral Fallon, what do you think?

Admiral FALLON. Could I point out something, Congressman?

Mr. POE. Just answer that question. I only have 5 minutes, and 20 seconds left. Is it the Iranians going to be investigating the Iranians and we got to give them 24 days notice before we show up?

Admiral FALLON. I don't believe that.

Mr. POE. You didn't see that in the agreement?

Admiral FALLON. I didn't read it that way, no.

Mr. POE. Did you read the agreement?

Admiral FALLON. Sure.

Mr. POE. Well, I read it that way.

Admiral FALLON. Okay.

Mr. POE. So let me just ask all four of you this question. I have got 4 seconds left. Should Congress approve this deal or not?

General.

General WALD. Going to make Iran more strong.

Mr. POE. Admiral Fallon.

Admiral FALLON. Congress should support implementation of this thing as the best alternative.

Mr. POE. Admiral Bird.

Admiral BIRD. Disapprove the deal, yes, sir.

Mr. WIESELTIER. No.

Mr. POE. Thank you.

Chairman ROYCE. All right. We go now to Mr. Ted Yoho of Florida.

Mr. YOHO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Gentlemen, appreciate you for being here.

I think so much has been said already today. Number one is, everything that we have already talked about, I think we are all in agreement that Iran is an enemy of the United States. We are all in agreement of that.

Iran is the leading sponsor of state terrorism. Of the young men and women that have been killed or wounded in Afghanistan and Iraq, 70 percent came from IEDs, 90 percent of those came from Iran.

And you just stated, Vice Admiral Bird, that this deal will make Iran stronger?

General Wald, Admiral Fallon, with the release of the money, whether it is \$50 billion or \$100 billion, will it make them stronger?

General WALD. I think that is the issue here, and I think the issue here is that we are not sure what we are going to get from a verification. And, yes, they will become stronger—

Mr. YOHO. I am going to talk about that.

Admiral Fallon, will this make them stronger, give them this money?

Admiral FALLON. I don't believe so.

Mr. YOHO. You don't believe so?

Admiral FALLON. No.

Mr. YOHO. Okay. Mr. Wieseltier.

Mr. WIESELTIER. In non-nuclear and conventional measures of military strength, asymmetrical warfare, terrorism and so on, yes.

Mr. YOHO. Okay. So let's look at where they are at right now without this money. They are funding terrorism around the world. I mean, as short as 3 years ago they plotted to kill the Saudi Ambassador on U.S. soil. So we have a good idea.

And, Admiral Fallon, you said we can't project into the future. It is kind of like *que sera, sera*, kind of a Doris Day song, you know, no offense to you. Hold on just a second.

Admiral FALLON. I don't believe that for a minute.

Mr. YOHO. And you were saying—

Admiral FALLON. No, I am not clairvoyant. I don't know that it is.

Mr. YOHO. You served for 40 years in this country, and I thank you for your service, and I know strategically in the military you project 5, 10, 15, 20, maybe 100 years, hopefully, down the future.

All one has to do to look at one's past is to look at the present situation. You see Iran, the leading sponsor of terrorism around the world, death to America, death to Israel, they are funding Hezbollah, Hamas. They have already said that they are going to retrofit over 100,000 scud-type missiles for Hezbollah with pinpoint accuracy laser technology. They are already saying that. They are already going to rebuild the tunnels. We see what they are doing in Central and South America.

So we see their present situation. We can predict what they are going to do in the future by what they are doing today. And, I mean, it is pretty clear they are an enemy of the United States, they are going to get stronger from this. And, you know, as far as an option, we need to walk away from the table, we need to run away, and the world, I think, will follow us.

Yes, there is economic development in there, but if we don't walk away from this deal there will be no snapback, and that was a fallacy anyways. Walk away, bring them back, put the sanctions back on, and when they are ready to negotiate they will release our four Americans, they will denounce terrorism, they will stop stating what they are doing, and this threat around the world. And it goes back to Sharia—not Sharia law, but Islamic law, the law of Taqiyyah, lie, cheat, and deceit every chance you can if it advances the Islamic state. And that is what they have done for thousands of years.

And, Mr. Wieseltier—

Mr. WIESELTIER. No, Congressman, I have to say that my opposition, my view of the Iranian Government has been perfectly clear. But for the record, I want to note that Christians and Jews have lied and cheated for thousands of years too, that the explanation of this in terms of their religion seems to me to be inadequate and really cannot explain what it is that—

Mr. YOHO. I am not going to disagree with that, but I am not negotiating with a Jewish state or a Christian state that is going to get a nuclear bomb.

Mr. WIESELTIER. Right. I just suggest that—

Mr. YOHO. According to our preamble of the Constitution, the number one goal of the United States of America is for the common defense of my country.

Mr. WIESELTIER. Absolutely.

Mr. YOHO. And that is what I am worried about.

Mr. WIESELTIER. Absolutely.

Mr. YOHO. And this is going to—you all agree that this is going to make Iran stronger.

Mr. WIESELTIER. My point is only that we need to analyze Iran, even in our opposition to it, in an intellectually responsible manner.

Mr. YOHO. And intellectually responsible, this is a bad deal, we need to run away it from.

And I am going to yield back, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it. I just wanted to get that out.

I appreciate the service all of you did, and I would hope you would help us turn this deal down and make a better deal.

The Corker and Cardin amendment or bill, we have already passed the deadline of that. This is a moot point. We are beyond that, and we need to start over.

I yield back.

Chairman ROYCE. We stand adjourned. I want to thank the panel one more time for your testimony here today, and also thank you very much for your service. Admiral and Vice Admiral, General, thank you for your service to this country.

[Whereupon, at 12:30 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128

Edward R. Royce (R-CA), Chairman

September 9, 2015

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live on the Committee website at <http://www.ForeignAffairs.house.gov>):

DATE: Wednesday, September 9, 2015

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

SUBJECT: Implications of a Nuclear Agreement with Iran (Part IV)

WITNESSES: General Chuck Wald, USAF, Retired
(Former Deputy Commander, U.S. European Command)

Admiral William Fallon, USN, Retired
(Former Commander, U.S. Central Command)

Vice Admiral John Bird, USN, Retired
(Former Commander, U.S. Seventh Fleet)

Mr. Leon Wieseltier
Isaiah Berlin Senior Fellow in Culture and Policy
Foreign Policy and Governance Studies
The Brookings Institution

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day Wednesday Date 9/9/2015 Room 2172

Starting Time 10:16 Ending Time 12:30

Recesses 0 (to) (to) (to) (to) (to) (to)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Edward R. Royce, Rep. Heana Ros-Lehtinen

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session

Executive (closed) Session

Televised

Electronically Recorded (taped)

Stenographic Record

TITLE OF HEARING:

Implications of a Nuclear Deal with Iran (Part IV)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

See attached.

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

none

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes No

(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)


STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: (List any statements submitted for the record.)

SFR - Rep. Gerald Connolly

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE

or

TIME ADJOURNED 12:30



Jean Marter, Director of Committee Operations

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>MEMBER</i>
X	Edward R. Royce, CA
X	Christopher H. Smith, NJ
X	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, FL
	Dana Rohrabacher, CA
X	Steve Chabot, OH
X	Joe Wilson, SC
	Michael T. McCaul, TX
X	Ted Poe, TX
X	Matt Salmon, AZ
X	Darrell Issa, CA
	Tom Marino, PA
X	Jeff Duncan, SC
X	Mo Brooks, AL
X	Paul Cook, CA
X	Randy Weber, TX
X	Scott Perry, PA
X	Ron DeSantis, FL
	Mark Meadows, NC
X	Ted Yoho, FL
X	Curt Clawson, FL
X	Scott DesJarlais, TN
	Reid Ribble, WI
	Dave Trott, MI
	Lee Zeldin, NY
X	Dan Donovan, NY

<i>PRESENT</i>	<i>MEMBER</i>
X	Eliot L. Engel, NY
X	Brad Sherman, CA
	Gregory W. Meeks, NY
X	Albio Sires, NJ
X	Gerald E. Connolly, VA
X	Theodore E. Deutch, FL
	Brian Higgins, NY
X	Karen Bass, CA
X	William Keating, MA
X	David Cicilline, RI
	Alan Grayson, FL
X	Ami Bera, CA
	Alan S. Lowenthal, CA
X	Grace Meng, NY
X	Lois Frankel, FL
X	Tulsi Gabbard, HI
X	Joaquin Castro, TX
X	Robin Kelly, IL
	Brendan Boyle, PA

Statement for the Record
Submitted by Mr. Connolly of Virginia

My decision to support the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) negotiated between the P5+1 and Iran is grounded in the hard reality that the alternative to this nuclear agreement is an opaque and unconstrained Iranian nuclear program hanging like the sword of Damocles over the security of the U.S. and our allies, including Israel.

The false hope offered by critics of the agreement is a return to the negotiating table to seek a better deal. The proposition that we would renounce our own agreement wrought by more than a year of tough negotiations and expect our negotiating partners – including Russia, China, and, of course, Iran itself – to sit back down at the table is a specious if not delusional argument.

We should not be naïve about the scenario in which Congress rejects this agreement brokered by the United States. Among our allies, we would divest ourselves of the goodwill that undergirded the American-led negotiations. Among our adversaries, we would confirm their suspicion that we are not to be trusted. The international sanctions regime that drove Iran to the table would collapse and our diplomatic leverage would be severely diminished in all future negotiations.

Most concerning of all, we would return once again to a situation of deep anxiety and uncertainty regarding Iran's nuclear ambitions. The countries of the world that have a strict policy of preventing a nuclear Iran, including the U.S. and a number of our allies, would be left with a scenario that could demand immediate and decisive military action – an option General Michael Hayden has stated would "guarantee that which we are trying to prevent, an Iran that will stop at nothing, in secret, to develop a nuclear weapon." Repeated military engagements incrementally beating back a secret Iranian nuclear program seem a fateful and ominous alternative to the diplomatic path laid before us.

Critics of the JCPOA have offered no alternative, and have tried to define this agreement by what it is not. It is not the perfect deal that dismantles every nut and bolt of the Iranian nuclear program, and it is not a comprehensive resolution of the myriad issues the U.S. and our allies have with the repressive regime in Tehran and its reprehensible support for terrorist insurgencies in the region. No one ever said it would be.

It is, however, a viable alternative to war that takes the Iranian nuclear issue off of the table and secures permanent commitments from Iran regarding the peaceful nature of its nuclear program. In other words, it is the diplomatic alternative we sought to attain when we entered into negotiations.

As a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC), I have participated in classified and unclassified briefings with military officials, the intelligence community, and international nuclear inspection experts regarding the P5+1 negotiations with Iran. HFAC has

conducted nearly two dozen hearings on the subject, and I have carefully reviewed the JCPOA, its annexes, and the accompanying Verification Assessment Report.

This deal adheres to the high standards for verification, transparency, and compliance on which any acceptable agreement with Iran must be founded. The JCPOA erects an unprecedented and intrusive inspections regime that provides the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with access to declared nuclear facilities and suspected covert nuclear development sites.

Additionally, the IAEA will be able to monitor Iran's entire nuclear program supply chain – including uranium mines and mills, centrifuge rotors and bellows production and storage facilities, and a dedicated procurement channel for nuclear-related or dual use materials and technology.

The JCPOA also rolls back major components and existing capabilities of the Iranian nuclear program. For at least 15 years, there will be no new enrichment facilities in Iran, uranium enrichment will be capped at 3.67% (well below weapons grade enrichment levels), there will be no enrichment research or fissile material at the underground facility at Fordow, and, after the heavy water research reactor in Arak is redesigned and rebuilt to not produce weapons grade plutonium, no new heavy water reactors will be constructed in Iran. Under the agreement, Iran must reduce its stockpile of enriched uranium by 98 percent and its number of installed centrifuges by two-thirds. These measures will extend Iran's nuclear breakout time from 2 months to at least 1 year. If these restrictions are not adhered to, the U.S. can at any time unilaterally revive the international sanctions regime currently in place.

Congress should immediately begin to conduct close oversight to ensure that the terms of the JCPOA are implemented and that Iran is living up to its obligations. More broadly, the U.S. must signal to Iran that its condemnable record on human rights, terrorism, and regional subversion will not be tolerated, and that the JCPOA does not restrict in any way our national security prerogative or the security commitments we have made to our allies, especially Israel.

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 11 of the Constitution vests Congress with the duty to authorize war. Implicit in that text is Congress' additional responsibility to exhaust all reasonable alternatives before committing the American people and our men and women in uniform to such a fateful path. The JCPOA represents our endeavor to provide that alternative. It is the product of earnest diplomacy, and Congress should support it.

